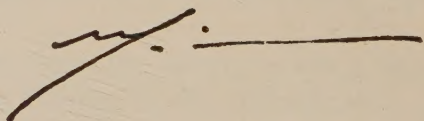




The Advent

The force was acting chiefly in the mind, the vital and, through it, in the physical... It has come further down in its action and now it is at work not only in the material but also in the subconscient and even in the inconscient. Unless you follow this descending movement and allow the force to act in your body and these material regions of the consciousness, you will find yourself stranded on the road without being able to advance any further. And to allow this working of the force, it is a detailed surrender of all movements, habits, tastes, preferences, sense of necessities, etc. that is urgently required.

20-11-49

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive-like mark followed by a horizontal line.

The ADVENT

August 1950

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— *Nolini Kanta Gupta*

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When all Thy work in human time is done,
The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
The life of earth a tree growing towards heaven,
The body of earth a tabernacle of God.
Awakened from the mortal's ignorance
Men shall be lit with the Eternal's ray
And the glory of my sun-lit in their thoughts
And feel in their hearts the sweetness of my love
And in their acts my Power's miraculous drive.
My will shall be the meaning of their days ;
Living for me, by me, in me they shall live.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, THE BOOK OF DAY, CANTO I)



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

THE NATURE OF PERFECTION

PERFECTION is often understood to mean the highest or the utmost possible development, even if it be in one particular line or direction. That, however, can better be called success or achievement. True perfection is not an extreme growth, however great or commendable it may be: it is the harmony of an all-round growth, the expression of the unified total being. And yet this does not involve a stultification of any limb or a forced diminution of any capacity. Perfection does not consist either in the harmonisation of the utmost possible development of each and every capacity, attribute or power of being. First of all, it is not a possible ideal, given the conditions of existence and manifestation. Secondly, it is not necessary: perfection can be realised even otherwise.

How is the harmony to be brought about in the human system composed of so many different and discordant factors, forms and forces of consciousness? It is not possible if one tries to make them accommodate each other, tone down the individual acuties and angularities, blunt or cut out the extreme expressions and effect some sort of a compromise or a pact of goodwill. It is not the Greek ideal of the golden mean nor is it akin to the modern democratic ideal which lays down that each element is free—to grow and possess—to the extent that it allows the same freedom to every

other element. No, for true harmony one has to go behind and beyond the apparent divergences to a secret being or status of consciousness, the bedrock of existence where all divergences are resolved and find their inherent and inalienable unity, their single origin and basis. If one gets there and takes one's stand upon that absolute oneness, then and then only the perfect harmony of all the diversities that naturally rise out of it as its self-expression becomes possible, not only possible but inevitable.

That bedrock is one's inmost spiritual being, the divine consciousness which is at once an individual centre, a cosmic or universal field of existence and a transcendent truth and reality. With that as the nucleus and around it the whole system has to be arranged and organised: according to the demand of the will and vision composing that consciousness, life has to manifest itself and play out its appointed role. Its configuration or disposition will be wholly determined by the Divine Purpose working in and through it; its fullness will be the fullness of the Divine Presence and intention. The mind will be wholly illumined, the vital with it will become the pure energy of Consciousness and the physical body will be made out of the substance of the divine being: our humanity will be the home and sanctuary of the Divine.

THE BASE OF SINCERITY

The great, perhaps, the greatest secret of life—*uttamam rahasyam*, to quote the familiar phrase of the Gita—consists in finding, in coming in contact with and remaining in permanent contact with this centre of our being, the nucleus of our living. And curiously, if we are alert and observant enough, we discover that this mysterious thing is not very far to seek. There is hardly any developed human being who has not had some time or other in the course of his life a feeling or perception that he is free, he is happy in a miraculous way, as if he is above or away from the vicissitudes of external life, nothing touches him and he is unique and self-fulfilled, he is on the summit of his being, in the topmost form of his nature. However fugitive that experience may be, it is the kernel of his being that revealed itself for a moment, the central consciousness that moves, guides, inspires and supports his whole life—and all his other lives too—although till now from behind the veil. That is what we call the Divine in the individual, the Inner Controller, *antaryamin*, the conscious being ever seated within the heart, *purusha sada hr̥di sannivishṭa*.

Once this centre has been aspected—in whatever manner, to whatever degree, even faintly and feebly—one has always to come back to it, as the

mariner to the pole-star, try to connect all external happenings as well as one's inner movements with this fountain-head. That is to say, one must think, feel or do nothing that is contrary to the truth it is, that is not in accord with its rhythm and law: indeed one must always endeavour to think only that thought, feel only that feeling, do only that act which is the spontaneous and inevitable outcome and expression of that innermost and topmost reality.

That is the definition of sincerity: to be transparent and single-pointed to your soul-consciousness, to your deity. And that also is the only way by which there can be realised in you, the highest and largest, the most intimate and absolute harmony you are capable of and that is demanded of you. The perfect organisation of the individual life can be obtained in and through the harmony inherent in the central reality, in the natural order of its activities. In the scheme or pattern laid out in the inmost consciousness, each element has its own orbit and its own quantum of energy, each force its allotted function: the will in each is exactly commensurable with what should be the expression in it of the total reality, each is the whole and rounded articulation of an aspect or figure put forth by the central truth in its self-display. As in a musical theme, each note has a definite pitch, amplitude, tone which give it its perfect form in order to constitute a common pattern—the highest pitch, the largest amplitude or the most vibrant tone is not needed, not only not needed, would be a bar on the contrary—even so, the individual man when he attains perfection realises in himself a harmony which gives the true expression of all his limbs, the fullest and fairest expression of each and every one as demanded by the divine role destined for him.

THE URGE FOR PROGRESSION

In the process of the expression and embodiment of this innermost truth, the first necessary condition is, as we have said, sincerity, that is to say, a constant reference to the demand of that truth, putting everything and judging everything in the light of that truth, a vigilant wakefulness to it. The second condition is *progression*. It is the law of the Truth that it is expressing itself, seeking to express itself continually and continuously in the march of life; it is always unfolding new norms and forms of its light and power, ever new degrees of realisation. The individual human consciousness has to recognise that progressive flux and march along with it. Human consciousness, the complex of external mind and life and body consciousness, has the habit of halting, clinging to the forms, experiences and gains of the past, storing them in memory, agreeing to a minimum change

only just to be able to pour the new into the old. But this conservatism, which is another name for *tamas* is fatal to the living truth within. Even like the *élan vital* so gloriously hymned by Bergson, the inmost consciousness, the central truth of being, the soul *élan* has always a forward looking reference. And it is precisely because the normal instrument of the body and life and mind has always a backward reference, because it slings back and cannot keep pace with the march of the soul consciousness that these members stagnate, wear away, decay and death ends it all. The past has its utility: it marks the stages of progress. It means assimilation, but must not mean stagnation. It may supply the present basis but must always open out to what is coming or may come. If one arrives at a striking realisation, a light is revealed, a Voice, a mantra heard, a norm disclosed, it is simply to be noted, taken in the stuff of the being, made part and parcel of the consciousness; you leave it at that and pass and press on. You must not linger at wayside illuminations however beautiful or even useful some may be. The ideal of the *paryataka*—the wanderer—may be taken as a concrete symbol of this principle. The Brahmanas described it graphically in the famous phrase, *charaivete*, “move on”. The Vedic Rishi sang of it in the memorable hymn to Dawn, the goddess who comes today the last of a succession of countless dawns in the immemorial past and the first of a never-ending series of the future. The soul is strung with a golden chain to the Great Fulfilment that moves ahead: even when fulfilled the soul does not rest or come to the end of its mission, it continues to be an ever new expression or instrumentation of the Infinite.

BEING OR BECOMING AND HAVING

Again, in this ceaseless continuity of progression it is indeed not necessary at all to stop a while or somewhere and become something for one's perfection or fulfilment. The normal ideal that is placed before man or which he himself seeks is that he should become something, a definite pattern of some particular achievement, and possess something in the sense of an acquisition. An ordinary man must have an occupation and even an extraordinary man, the saint or the sage, must embody, that is to say, enchain himself in the name and form of a particular realisation—a *siddhanta* or a *siddhi*. A man has to be a soldier, a merchant, a politician or a poet, a philosopher: even so he has to be a *bhakta* or a *jnani*, a *mouni* or a *vaksiddha*. Each human being should have a ticket and a roll number, an identity card. Now, for the soul of man none of these or other adjuncts are necessary: its progress and its growth are independent of such auxiliaries or correlates. A soul

can be and even express itself perfectly at the highest point of its being without formulating itself, binding itself in a scheme of some external achievement or functioning. The soul need not possess any of the glories—*aishwaryas*—to realise itself, in order to be the abode of the Divine. Its very existence is full to the brim of the substance of the truth and its simple living marks the law or rhythm of that Truth.

A soul-full man, whatever he says, thinks, feels or acts, always embodies wholly the Divine. Not that because he says, acts, thinks or feels in a certain manner that he has attained perfection or is in dynamic union with the summit and integral consciousness. As the Mother brings out the distinction, although in a somewhat different context, the perfect soul-existence cannot be judged by the forms it takes, the forms themselves have to be judged by the soul-existence.

SUCCESS AND ITS CONDITIONS

Success in any undertaking can come only by the application of a quiet force. A force that is restless, shaky, nervous always misses the mark. A steady, controlled, almost rigid hand alone can shoot the missile that hits the bull's eye. The Upanishad speaks of being one and indivisible with one's aim, even like an arrow-head fixed into the target. An undivided concentration naturally means an absolute unruffled tranquillity.

How is this tranquil energism to be secured? What are the conditions that produce and maintain and foster it? The first condition is self-confidence. One must have trust in oneself, a full faith that one is able to do the thing. A pessimist, a half-hearted doubter, a defeatist can never achieve anything in the world. All successful men, whatever share they agreed to give to chance, had always immense hope and faith. Against failures, against tremendous odds they have always persisted, always believed in their star. Like Caesar they said not only to themselves but also to others: "Thou carriest with thee the fate of Caesar." Only, of course, the self-confidence sometimes overrides itself, becomes conceit and arrogance. Then you go beyond your depth, tempt the fates beyond your control and open the door to failure. So along with self-confidence, there must be an element of sobriety; we will call it modesty—true modesty that can perceive the extreme limit at least of the possible and the impossible. Such modesty itself is a source of serenity and calmness in the mind and nerves. Imagine a lion couchant, aiming at its prey. The prey remains spell-bound, unable to run away. The lion's gaze is fixed upon its victim; its hypnotism consists in a calm and absolute self-confidence, an unshakable assurance that its will shall prevail.

Man's self-confidence is, as I have said, apt to overleap itself; it turns into self-conceit and blind and obstinate complacency. An animal by instinct knows how to remain within his limits and continue to be unfailing in its judgment: it is domestic animals that begin to get muddled in their instinctive movements. With the growth of the mental self-consciousness man loses the sense of his limits and always seeks to exceed himself. And therefore failure and fall have become almost his constant companions. His efforts are not commensurate with his powers. Hence in his case modesty is a great asset and a desideratum. Modesty, we said, is the consciousness of one's limitation—not overestimating oneself, nor for that matter underestimating oneself: it is judging exactly what one is.

That, however, is the case with the normal man with the normal nature. But precisely because of the growth of self-consciousness, man has developed the power to increase his powers: he can extend the boundaries of his capacities and possibilities. He need not confine himself within the dimensions that he naturally possesses or acquires in the normal course of his growth. He can follow an abnormal or extra-ordinary course of growth, break through his limits and establish contact with the vast and the illimitable and the incalculable, even the very fount and origin of all power. That is the gift of Yoga, spiritual discipline.

Yoga brings in a different line and scheme of life. For it is built upon soul-consciousness, upon Divine Nature which means another history of individual destiny. Even then tranquillity and self-confidence are at the basis of a Yogic life also and a new degree of modesty and humility.

MAN TO BE SURPASSED

"Man is a thing that shall be surpassed". This burning phrase of Nietzsche has unsealed many eyes: it has also scalded and frightened others. It has been hailed by many as the motto, the mantra of the age to come; it has been denounced equally as a false light, a lead of arrogance and egoism.

Erich Kehler (a Czech now become American citizen) in his book "Man the Measure" seeks to strike a balance, but as the title indicates, evidently leans more to the second, the reactionary, than to the original ideal. He posits that man's humanity is to be preserved and fostered, that is to say, his true humanity, that which distinguishes him from mere animality. The Greek ideal, according to Kehler, was an advance upon the animal man; it brought in the ideal of the rational man. And yet the Greek ideal, in spite of its acceptance of the whole man—*mens sana in corpore sano*—embracing as it did his physical, ethical and aesthetic development, laid on the whole

a greater emphasis upon reason, upon rationalising, that is, ordering life according to a rational pattern. And then the Greek ideal was more for the individual; it was for the culture and growth of the individuality in man. Society was considered as composed of such individualised units. The degree of personal choice, of individual liberty, of free understanding that a Greek citizen enjoyed marked the evolution secured by man out of the primitive society. Still the integral man is not the rationalistic man, even as he is not the mere biological man: and he is not predominantly individualistic either.

Yes, man's true humanity, says Kehler, almost echoing Nietzsche, consists precisely in his capacity to surpass himself. The animal is wholly engrossed in his natural nature and activities; but man is capable of standing back, can separate from his biological self, observe, control and direct. For him "existence" truly means (as the Existentialist declares today) *ex + sistere* or *ex + stare*, to stay or stand outside. That is the surpassing enjoyed by him and demanded of him—going beyond one's natural or normal self. But there is a danger here. For there can be a too much surpassing, a going away altogether, as religion or spirituality usually enjoins. Christianity, for example, which is in many senses a movement contrary to the Greek spirit, taught a transcendence that was for luring or driving the human soul away from the world and men towards an extra-terrestrial *sumum bonum*.

That is a false light, a wrong lead. Surpassing should not mean going beyond—up and away; it means rather coming out of one's self and going abroad, finding one's kinship and unity with others, with the world around. The individualisation of the self—given by the Greek culture—was the first step; the next step in evolution is the "collectivisation" of the self. It is not in the Nazi or Bolshevich sense that we have to understand the word: it does not equate with totalitarianism. The peril is there, no doubt.

But there was danger in individualism too: and the Greek polity suffered from it. For individualism meant clash of personalities: indeed rivalry, ambition, intolerance, arrogance, all the violent or vulgar movements of egoism occupy a good part of the life story of the old-world peoples trained in the classical culture. On the other hand, modern collectivism tends towards a uniform levelling down of all individual eccentricity. But dangers apart, the truth of either conception, ingrained in human nature, has to be recognised and accepted. A humanity composed of developed and formed individuals living in broad commonalty—that is the highest achievement the present author holds before mankind.

Mr. Kehler does not define very clearly the nature and function of this commonalty: but it almost borders on what I may call human humanism, something in the manner of the other modern humanist Albert Schweitzer,

Two types of humanism have been distinguished: man-centred humanism and God-centred humanism. Kehler's (and even Schweitzer's) humanism belongs very much to the first category. He does not seem to believe in any transcendent Spirit or God apart from the universal totality of existence, the unitary life of all, somewhat akin to the *Vie Unanime* of Jules Romains.

The limitation of such a human ideal is for us evident. We demand a total suprasing of man, although that does not mean a rejection of man. Unless human life is built upon foundations quite other than what they are now, we say there can be no permanent or radical remedy to the ills it suffers from. Hence we are for utter transcendence; for, the highest height it is possible for the consciousness to reach and the being to dwell in, even the experience of Brahman or unmitigated Absolute of the Mayavadin or the Zero, Shunyam of the Buddhist not excluded. Since it is there that the true foundations of creation lie hidden and it is from there that a new world has to be recreated, a new humanity reshaped. The very stuff of human nature has to be changed, not only what is considered as bad in it but what is valued as good also. For beyond good and evil is Nature Divine. Man has to find out this divine nature and dissolve his human nature into that, remould it, reshape it in that pattern. So long as human consciousness remains too human, it will be always branded with the bar sinister of all earthly things. Man has to grow into the immortal seated within mortality, into the light that shines inviolate on the other side of the darkness we live in. That immortality, that light one has to bring down here on earth and in ourselves, and out of it build a new earth and a new human self and life.

Savitri

BOOK FOUR

THE BOOK OF BIRTH AND QUEST

CANTO TWO

THE GROWTH OF THE FLAME

A LAND of mountains and wide sun-beat plains
And giant rivers pacing to vast seas,
A field of creation and spiritual hush,
Silence swallowing life's acts into the deeps,
Of thought's transcendent climb and heavenward leap,
A brooding world of reverie and trance,
Filled with the mightiest works of God and man,
Where Nature seemed a dream of the Divine
And beauty and grace and grandeur had their home,
Harboured the childhood of the incarnate Flame.
Over her watched millennial influences
And the deep godheads of a grandiose past
Looked on her and saw the future's godheads come
As if this magnet drew their powers unseen.
Earth's brooding wisdom spoke to her still breast;
Mounting from mind's last peaks to mate with gods,
Making earth's brilliant thoughts a springing board
To dive into the cosmic vastnesses,
The knowledge of the thinker and the seer
Saw the unseen and thought the unthinkable,
Opened the enormous doors of the unknown,
Rent Man's horizons into infinity.
A shoreless sweep was lent to the mortal's acts,
And art and beauty sprang from the human depths;
Nature and soul vied in nobility.

Ethics the human keyed to imitate heaven;
The harmony of a rich culture's tones
Refined the sense and magnified its reach
To hear the unheard and glimpse the invisible
And taught the soul to soar beyond things known
Inspiring life to greaten and break its bounds,
Aspiring to the Immortals' unseen world.
Leaving earth's safety daring wings of Mind
Bore her above the trodden fields of thought
Crossing the mystic seas of the Beyond
To live on eagle heights near to the Sun.
There wisdom sits on her eternal throne.
All her life's turns led her to symbol doors
Admitting to secret Powers that were her kin;
Adept of truth, initiate of bliss,
A mystic acolyte trained in Nature's school,
Aware of the marvel of created things
She laid the secrecies of her heart's deep muse
Upon the altar of the Wonderful;
Her hours were ritual in a timeless fane ;
Her acts became gestures of sacrifice.
Invested with a rhythm of higher spheres
The word was used as a hieratic means
For the release of the imprisoned spirit
Into communion with its comrade gods.
Or it helped to beat out new expressive forms
Of that which labours in the heart of life,
Some immemorial Soul in men and things,
Seeker of the Unknown and the Unborn
Carrying a light from the Ineffable
To rend the veil of the last mysteries.
Intense philosophies pointed earth to heaven
Or on foundations broad as cosmic Space
Upraised the earth-mind to superhuman heights.
Overpassing lines that please the outward eyes
But hide the sight of that which lives within
Sculpture and painting concentrated sense
Upon an inner vision's motionless verge,
Revealed a figure of the invisible,
Unveiled all Nature's meaning in a form,

Or caught into a body the Divine.
The architecture of the Infinite
Discovered here its inward-musing shapes
Captured into wide breadths of soaring stone:
Music brought down celestial yearnings, song
Held the merged heart absorbed in rapturous depths,
Linking the human with the cosmic cry;
The world-interpreting movements of the dance
Moulded idea and mood to a rhythmic sway
And posture; crafts minute in subtle lines
Eternised a swift moment's memory
Or showed in a carving's sweep, a cup's design
The underlying patterns of the unseen:
Poems in largeness cast like moving worlds
And metres surging with the ocean's voice
Translated by grandeurs locked in Nature's heart
But thrown now into a crowded glory of speech
The beauty and sublimity of her forms,
The passion of her moments and her moods
Lifting the human word near to the god's.
Man's eyes could look into the inner realms;
His scrutiny discovered number's law
And organised the motions of the stars,
Mapped out the visible fashioning of the world,
Questioned the process of his thoughts or made
A theorised diagram of mind and life.
These things she took in as her nature's food,
But these alone could fill not her wide Self:
A human seeking limited by its gains,
To her they seemed the great and early steps
Hazardous of a young discovering spirit
Which saw not yet by its own native light;
It tapped the universe with testing knocks
Or stretched to find Truth-mind's divining rod;
A growing out there was to numberless sides,
But not the widest seeing of the soul,
Not yet the vast direct immediate touch,
Nor yet the art and wisdom of the Gods.
A boundless knowledge greater than man's thought,
A happiness too high for heart and sense

Locked in the world and yearning for release
She felt in her; waiting as yet for form,
It asked for objects around which to grow
And natures strong to bear without recoil
The splendour of her native royalty,
Her greatness and her sweetness and her bliss,
Her might to possess and her vast power to love:
Earth made a stepping-stone to conquer heaven,
The soul saw beyond heaven's limiting boundaries,
Met a great light from the Unknowable
And dreamed of a transcendent action's sphere.
Aware of the universal Self in all
She turned to living hearts and human forms;
Her soul's reflections, complements, counterparts,
The close outlying portions of her being
Divided from her by walls of body and mind
Yet to her spirit bound by ties divine.
Overcoming invisible hedge and masked defence
And the loneliness that separates soul from soul,
She wished to make all one immense embrace
That she might house in it all living things
Raised into a splendid point of seeing light
Out of division's dense inconscient cleft,
And make them one with God and world and her.
Only a few responded to her call:
Still fewer felt the screened divinity
And strove to mate its godhead with their own,
Approaching with some kinship to her heights.
Uplifted towards luminous secrecies
Or conscious of some splendour hidden above
They leaped to find her in a moment's flash,
Glimpsing a light in a celestial vast,
But could not keep the vision and the power
And fell back to life's dull ordinary tone.
A mind daring heavenly experiment,
Growing towards some largeness they felt near,
Testing the unknown's bound with eager touch
They still were prisoned by their human grain:
They could not keep up with her tireless step;
Too small and eager for her large-paced will,

Too narrow to look with the unborn Infinite's gaze
Their nature weary grew of things too great.
For even the close partners of her thoughts
Who could have walked the nearest to her ray,
Worshipped the power and light they felt in her
But could not match the measure of her soul.
A friend and yet too great wholly to know,
She walked in their front towards a greater light,
Their leader and queen over their hearts and souls,
One close to their bosoms, yet divine and far.
Admiring and amazed they saw her stride
Attempting with a godlike rush and leap
Heights for their human stature too remote
Or with a slow great many-sided toil
Pushing towards aims they hardly could conceive;
Yet forced to be the satellites of her sun
They moved unable to forego her light,
Desiring they clutched at her with outstretched hands
Or followed stumbling in the paths she made.
Or longing with their self of life and flesh
They clung to her for heart's nourishment and support:
The rest they could not see in visible light;
Vaguely they bore her inner mightiness.
Or bound by the senses and the longing heart,
Adoring with a turbid human love,
They could not grasp the mighty spirit she was
Or change by closeness to be even as she.
Some felt her with their souls and thrilled with her;
A greatness felt near yet beyond mind's grasp;
To see her was a summons to adore,
To be near her drew a high communion's force.
So men worship a god too great to know,
Too high, too vast to wear a limiting shape;
They feel a Presence and obey a might,
Adore a love whose rapture invades their breasts;
To a divine ardour quickening the heart-beats,
A law they follow greatening heart and life.
Opened to a breath is the new diviner air,
Opened to man is a freer, happier world:
He sees high steps climbing to Self and Light.

Her divine parts the soul's allegiance called:
It saw, it felt; it knew the deity.
Her will was puissant on their nature's acts,
Her heart's inexhaustible sweetness lured their hearts,
A being they loved whose bounds exceeded theirs;
Her measure they could not reach but bore her touch,
Answering with the flower's answer to the sun
They gave themselves to her and asked no more.
One greater than themselves, too wide for their ken,
Their minds could not understand nor wholly know,
Their lives replied to hers, moved at her words:
They felt a godhead and obeyed a call,
Answered to her lead and did her work in the world;
Their lives, their natures moved compelled by hers
As if the truth of their own larger selves
Put on an aspect of divinity
To exalt them to a pitch beyond their earth's.
They felt a larger future meet their walk;
She held their hands, she chose for them their paths:
They were moved by her towards great unknown things,
Faith drew them and the joy to feel themselves hers;
They lived in her, they saw the world with her eyes.
Some turned to her against their nature's bent;
Divided between wonder and revolt,
Drawn by her charm and mastered by her will,
Possessed by her, her striving to possess,
Impatient subjects, their tied longing hearts
Hugging the bonds close of which they most complained,
Murmured at a yoke they would have wept to lose,
The splendid yoke of her beauty and her love:
Others pursued her with life's blind desires
And claiming all of her as their lonely own,
Hastened to engross her sweetness meant for all.
As earth claims light for its lone separate need
Demanding her for their sole jealous clasp,
They asked from her movements bounded like their own
And to their smallness craved a like response.
Or they repined that she surpassed their grip,
And hoped to bind her close with longing's cords.
Or finding her touch desired too strong to bear

They blamed her for a tyranny they loved,
Shrank into themselves as from too bright a sun,
Yet hankered for the splendour they refused.
Angrily enamoured of her sweet passionate ray
The weakness of their earth could hardly bear,
They longed but cried out at the touch desired
Inapt to meet divinity so close,
Intolerant of a Force they could not house.
Some drawn unwillingly by her divine sway
Endure it like a sweet but alien spell,
Unable to mount to levels too sublime
They yearn to draw her down to their own earth.
Or forced to centre round her their passionate lives
They hoped to bind to their heart's human needs
The glory and grace that had enslaved their souls.

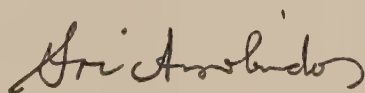
But mid this world these hearts that answered her call
None could stand up her equal and her mate.
In vain she stooped to equal them with her heights,
Too pure that air was for small souls to breathe.
These comrade selves to raise to her own wide breadths
Her heart desired and fill with her own power
That a diviner Force might enter life,
A breath of Godhead greaten human time.
Although she leaned down to their littleness
Covering their lives with her strong passionate hands
And knew by sympathy their needs and wants
And dived in the shallow wave-depths of their lives
And met and shared their heart-beats of grief and joy
And bent to heal their sorrow and their pride,
Lavishing the might that was hers on her lone peak
To lift to it their aspiration's cry
And though she drew their souls into her vast
And surrounded with the silence of her deeps
And held as the great Mother holds her own,
Only her earthly surface bore their charge
And mixed its fire with their mortality:
Her greater self lived sole, unclaimed, within.
Oftener in dumb Nature's stir and peace
A nearness she could feel serenely one;
The Force in her drew earth's subhuman broods;

And to her spirit's large and free delight
She joined the ardent-hued magnificent lives
Of animal and bird and flower and tree.
They answered to her with the simple heart.
In man a dim disturbing somewhat lives;
It knows but turns away from divine Light
Preferring the dark ignorance of the fall.
Among the many who came drawn to her
Nowhere she found her partner of high tasks,
The comrade of her soul, her other self
Who was made with her, like God and Nature, one.
Some near approached, were touched, caught fire, then failed.
Too great was her demand, too pure her force.
Thus lighting earth around her like a sun,
Yet in her inmost sky an orb aloof,
A distance severed her from those most close.
Puissant, apart her soul as the gods live.

As yet with the great world she had no link;
In a small circle of young eager hearts,
Her spirit's early reign and human school,
Her apprenticeship she made to life and death,
Content in her little garden of the gods
As blossoms a flower in an unvisited place.
Earth nursed, unconscious still, the inhabiting flame,
Yet something deeply stirred and dimly knew ;
There was a movement and a passionate call,
A rainbow dream, a hope of golden change;
Some secret wing of expectation beat,
A growing sense of something new and rare
And beautiful stole across the heart of Time.
Then a faint whisper of her touched the soil,
Breathed like a hidden need the soul divines;
The eye of the great world discovered her,
A wonder lifted up its bardic voice.
A key to a Light still kept in being's care,
The sun-word of an ancient mystery's sense,
Her name ran murmuring on the lips of men
Exalted and sweet like an inspired verse
Struck from the epic lyre of rumour's winds
Or sung like a chanted thought by the poet Fame,

But like a sacred symbol's was that cult.
Admired, unsought, intangible to the grasp
Her beauty and flaming strength were seen afar
Like lightning playing with the fallen day,
A glory unapproachably divine.
There came to join her heart no heart's approach,
No transient earthly love assailed her calm,
No hero passion had the strength to seize;
No eyes demanded her replying eyes.
A Power within her awed the imperfect flesh;
The self-protecting genius in our clay
Divined the goddess in the woman's shape
And drew back from a touch beyond its kind,
The earth-nature bound in the sense-life's narrow make.
The hearts of men are amorous of clay-kin
And bear not spirits lone and high who bring
Fire-intimations from the deathless planes
Too vast for souls not born to mate with heaven.
Whoever is too great must lonely live,
Adored he walks in mighty solitude;
Vain is his labour to create his kins,
His only comrade is the Strength within.
Thus was it for a while with Savitri,
All worshipped marvellingly, none dared to claim.
Her mind sat high pouring its golden beams,
Her heart was a crowded temple of delight.
A single lamp lit in perfection's house,
A bright pure image in a priestless shrine,
Alone amid surrounding crowds she dwelt,
Apart in herself until her hour of fate.

END OF CANTO TWO



MAN AND WOMAN IN YOGA

(LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO)

I

IN a general way the only method for succeeding in having between a man and a woman the free and natural yogic relations that should exist between a sadhak and a sadhika in this Yoga is to be able to meet each other without thinking at all that one is a man and another a woman—both are simply human beings, both sadhaks, both striving to serve the Divine and seeking the Divine alone and none else. Have that fully in yourself and no difficulty is likely to come.

II

A personal relation is formed when there is an exclusive mutual looking to each other. The rule about personal relations in this Yoga is this: (1) All personal relations to disappear in the single relation between the sadhaka and the Divine; (2) All personal (psychic-spiritual) relations to proceed from the Divine Mother, determined by her, and to be part of the single relation with the Divine Mother. In so far as it keeps to this double rule and admits no physical indulgence or vital deformation or mixture, a personal relation can be there. But since as yet the Supramental has not taken possession but is only descending and there is still struggle in the vital and physical levels, there must be a great carefulness such as would not be necessary if the supramental transformation were already there. Both have to be in direct relation with the Mother and in a total dependence on her and to see that that remains and that nothing diminishes its totality or cuts across it in the least degree.

III

1. All physical sexual relations or connection between a sadhak and sadhika are absolutely forbidden and inadmissible in the Ashram.

2. All vital relations of a sexual character are contrary to the sadhana and must also be given up by those who wish to stay in the Ashram and progress in the Yoga.

3. Even husband and wife must stop all conjugal relations and regard each other as fellow-sadhaks only and not as husband and wife. It is not as man and woman that the sadhaks are here; they have not come here to continue or to form vital or physical sexual relations between themselves under any pretext but to practise Yoga.

4. Any sadhak forming vital relations with others under the pretext of a psychic or spiritual relation is deceiving himself and violating the Truth and breaking the rule of the Yoga.

5. No sadhak should worship another sadhak or look on him as the embodied Divine; such movements are contrary to the sadhana and to the discipline of the Ashram and create false movements in the atmosphere.

IV

There are a number of women who can love with the mind, the psychic, the vital (the heart), but they shrink from a touch on the body and even when that goes, the physical act remains abhorrent to them. They may yield, under pressure, but it does not reconcile them to the act which always seems to them animal and degrading. Women know this, but men seem to find it hard to believe; but it is perfectly true.

Abnormal is a word which you can stick on anything that is not quite common, cheap and ordinary. In that way genius is abnormal, so is spirituality, so is the attempt to live by high ideals. The tendency to physical chastity in women is not abnormal, it is fairly common and includes a very high feminine type.

The mind is the seat of thought and perception, the heart is the seat of love, the vital of desire—but how does that prevent the existence of mental love? As the mind can be invaded by the feelings of the emotional or the vital, so the heart too can be dominated by the mind and moved by mental forces.

There is a vital love, a physical love. It is possible for the vital to desire a woman for various reasons without love—in order to satisfy the instinct of domination or possession, in order to draw in the vital forces of a woman so as to feed one's own vital or for the exchange of vital forces, to satisfy vanity, the hunter's instinct of the chase, etc. etc. (This is from man's viewpoint—but the woman also has her vital motives.) This is often called love, but it is only vital desire, a kind of lust. If, however, the emotions

of the heart are awakened, then it becomes vital love—a mixed affair with any or all of these vital motives strong, but still vital love.

There may too be a physical love, the attraction of beauty, the physical sex-appeal or anything else of the kind awakening the emotions of the heart. If that does not happen, then the physical need is all and that is sheer lust, nothing more. But physical love is possible.

In the same way there can be a mental love. It arises from the attempt to find one's ideal in another or from some strong mental passion of admiration and wonder or from the mind's seeking for a comrade, a complement and fulfiller of one's nature, a *sahadharmin*, a guide and helper, a leader and master or from a hundred other mental motives. By itself that does not amount to love, though often it is so ardent as to be hardly distinguishable from it and may even push to sacrifice of life, entire self-giving, etc. etc. But when it awakes the emotions of the heart, then it may lead to a very powerful love which is yet mental in its root and dominant character. Ordinarily, however, it is the mind and vital together which combine; but this combination can exist along with a disinclination or positive dislike for the physical act and its accompaniments. No doubt, if the man presses, the woman is likely to yield, but it is *à contre-cœur*, as they say, against her feelings and her deepest instincts.

It is an ignorant psychology that reduces everything to the sex-motive and the sex-impulse.

V

“Les femmes ne sont pas plus liées à la conscience vitale et matérielle que les hommes—au contraire, comme elles n'ont pas, en général, les prétentions mentales arrogantes des hommes, il leur est plus facile de découvrir leur être psychique et de se laisser guider par lui.....”

*Pas conscientes, généralement, d'une façon mentale qui puisse s'exprimer en mots, mais conscientes dans leurs sentiments et chez les meilleurs, dans leurs actes.”*¹ (*The Mother*)

No doubt, they can discover their psychic being more easily,—but that is not enough. It is the first step. The next is to live in the psychic. The third is to make the psychic the ruler of the being. The fourth is to rise

¹ Women are no more tied to the vital and material consciousness than men are; on the contrary, as they have not generally the arrogant mental pretensions of men, it is easier for them to find out their psychic being and be guided by it.... They are not generally conscious in a mental way that can be expressed in words, but they are conscious in their feelings and the best among them in their acts,

beyond the mind. The fifth is to bring what is beyond into the lower nature. I don't say it is always done in that order, but all that has to be done.

There may not be so much mental questioning but there may be a lot of vital questioning and resistance.

(Intuitive) of course—but it is the spontaneous intuition of the heart or of the vital mind, not the Intuition with a capital I.

The difficulty with men is not purely mental. There too it is vital—only men call in their intellect to defend their vital against the coming or the touch or the pressure of the Divine, women call in their vital mind to do the same thing.

Woman's living in the material and vital is not the cause—it is man's living in the vital and material that is the cause of his finding her an obstacle. She also finds him an obstacle and could say of him that he is *narakasya-dwaram*. The complaint that man lives less in the vital and material than woman is not true. He makes more use of his intellect for vital and material purposes—that is all.

The relation has to be limited as it is because sex immediately trots into the front. You are invited to live above the vital and deeper than the vital—then only you can use the vital aright. Buddha was for Nirvana and what is the use of having relations with any body if you are bound for Nirvana? Ramakrishna insisted on isolation during the period when a man is spiritually raw,—he did not object to meeting when he becomes ripe and no longer a slave of sex.

VI

In Greece woman was a domestic slave except the Hetairae and they were educated only to please. In Rome "she remained at home and spun wool" was the highest eulogy for woman. It was only for a brief period of the Empire that woman began to be more free, but she was never put in an equality with man. Your medical man was either an ignoramus or was talking through his hat at you.....What an argument—from exceptional conditions as against the habits of millenniums! What about administration, rule, business, in which women have shown themselves as capable and more consistently capable than many men? These things need no brains? Any imbecile can do them?

It means that is what men have mainly demanded of them—to be their servants, nurses, cooks, children-bearers and rearers, ministers to their sex-desires, etc. That has been their occupation and aim in life and their

natures have got adapted to their work. All that they have achieved else than that is by the way—in spite of the yoke laid on them. And then man smiles a superior smile and says it was all due to woman's inferior nature, not to the burden laid on her. They have been trained to that nature through the ages—that is why subjection, self-effacement, to be at the mercy of man has been their lot—it has given them that training. But it has left them also another kind of ego which is their spiritual obstacle—the ego which is behind the *abhimān* and the hunger-strike.

All these clear-cut assertions are mental statements—mental statements are too clear-cut to be true, as philosophy and science have now begun to discover. Life and being are too complex for that.

There is no universal rule. Women can be as sexual as men or more. But there are numbers of women who dislike sex and there are very few men. One Sukhdev in a million, but many Dianas and Pallas Athenes. The virgin is really a feminine conception; men are repelled by the idea of eternal virginity. Many women would remain without any waking of the sexual instinct if men did not thrust it on them and that cannot be said of many, perhaps of any man. But there is another side to the picture. Women are perhaps less physically sexual than man on the whole,—but what about vital sexuality, the instinct of possessing and being possessed, etc. etc.?

That is the old monastic idea. It arises from the extreme sexuality of men. They see in women the *narakasya dwāram* because that door is so wide open in themselves. But they prefer to throw the blame on women.... That was not due to sex but to woman's desire for new experience and knowledge (In reply to the question that man's fall from heaven was due to woman.)

Sri Anubindo

THE MOTIVES OF DEVOTION*

ALL religion begins with the conception of some Power or existence greater and higher than our limited and mortal selves, a thought and act of worship done to that Power, and an obedience offered to its will, its laws or its demands. But Religion, in its beginnings, sets an immeasurable gulf between the Power thus conceived, worshipped and obeyed and the worshipper. Yoga in its culmination abolishes the gulf; for Yoga is union. We arrive at union with it through knowledge; for as our first obscure conceptions of it clarify, enlarge, deepen, we come to recognise it as our own highest self, the origin and sustainer of our being and that towards which it tends. We arrive at union with it through works; for from simply obeying we come to identify our will with its Will, since only in proportion as it is identified with this Power that is its source and ideal, can our will become perfect and divine. We arrive at union with it also by worship; for the thought and act of a distant worship develops into the necessity of close adoration and this into the intimacy of love, and the consummation of love is union with the Beloved. It is from this development of worship that the Yoga of devotion starts and it is by this union with the Beloved that it finds its highest point and consummation.

All our instincts and the movements of our being begin by supporting themselves on the ordinary motives of our lower human nature,—mixed and egoistic motives at first, but afterwards they purify and elevate themselves, they become an intense and special need of our higher nature quite apart from the results our actions bring with them; finally they exalt themselves into a sort of categorical imperative of our being, and it is through our obedience to this that we arrive at that supreme something self-existent in us which was all the time drawing us towards it, first by the lures of our egoistic nature, then by something much higher, larger, more universal, until we are able to feel its own direct attraction which is the strongest and most imperative of all. In the transformation of ordinary religious worship into the Yoga of pure Bhakti we see this development from the

* *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part II (The Yoga of Divine Love), Chapter 2.

motivated and interested worship of popular religion into a principle of motiveless and self-existent love. This last is in fact the touchstone of the real Bhakti and shows whether we are really in the central way or are only upon one of the bypaths leading to it. We have to throw away the props of our weakness, the motives of the ego, the lures of our lower nature before we can deserve the divine union.

Faced with the sense of a Power or perhaps a number of Powers greater and higher than himself by whom his life in Nature is overshadowed, influenced, governed, man naturally applies to it or to them the first primitive feelings of the natural being among the difficulties, desires and dangers of that life,—fear and interest. The enormous part played by these motives in the evolution of the religious instinct, is undeniable, and in fact, man being what he is, it could hardly have been less; and even when religion has advanced fairly far on its road, we see these motives still surviving, active, playing a sufficiently large part, justified and appealed to by Religion herself in support of her claims on man. The fear of God, it is said, —or, it may be added for the sake of historical truth, the fear of Gods, —is the beginning of religion, a half-truth upon which scientific research, trying to trace the evolution of religion, ordinarily in a critical and often a hostile rather than in a sympathetic spirit, has laid undue emphasis. But not the fear of God only, for man does not act, even most primitively, from fear alone, but from twin motives, fear and desire, fear of things unpleasant and maleficent and desire of things pleasant and beneficent,—therefore from fear and interest. Life to him is primarily and engrossingly,—until he learns to live more in his soul and only secondarily in the action and reaction of outward things,—a series of actions and results, things to be desired, pursued and gained by action and things to be dreaded and shunned, yet which may come upon him as a result of action. And it is not only by his own action but by that also of others and of Nature around him that these things come to him. As soon, then, as he comes to sense a Power behind all this which can influence or determine action and result, he conceives of it as a dispenser of boons and sufferings, able and under certain conditions willing to help him or hurt, save and destroy.

In the most primitive parts of his being he conceives of it as a thing of natural egoistic impulses like himself, beneficent when pleased, maleficent when offended; worship is then a means of propitiation by gifts and a supplication by prayer. He gets God on his side by praying to him and flattering him. With a more advanced mentality, he conceives of the action of life as reposing on a certain principle of divine justice, which he reads

always according to his own ideas and character, as a sort of enlarged copy of his human justice; he conceives the idea of moral good and evil and looks upon suffering and calamity and all things unpleasant as a punishment for his sins and upon happiness and good fortune and all things pleasant as a reward of his virtue. God appears to him as a king, judge, legislator, executor of justice. But still regarding him as a sort of magnified Man, he imagines that as his own justice can be deflected by prayers and propitiation, so the divine justice can also be deflected by the same means. Justice is to him reward and punishment, and the justice of punishment can be modified by mercy to the suppliant, while rewards can be supplemented by special favours and kindness such as Power when pleased can always bestow on its adherents and worshippers. Moreover, God like ourselves is capable of wrath and revenge, and wrath and revenge can be turned by gifts and supplication and atonement; he is capable too of partiality, and his partiality can be attracted by gifts, by prayer and by praise. Therefore instead of relying solely on the observation of the moral law, worship as prayer and propitiation is still continued.

Along with these motives there arises another development of personal feeling, first of the awe which one naturally feels for something vast, powerful and incalculable beyond our nature by a certain inscrutability in the springs and extent of its action, and of the veneration and adoration which one feels for that which is higher in its nature or its perfection than ourselves. For, even while preserving largely the idea of a God endowed with the qualities of human nature, there still grows up along with it, mixed up with it or superadded, the conception of an omniscience, an omnipotence and a mysterious perfection quite other than our nature. A confused mixture of all these motives, variously developed, often modified, subtilised or glossed over, is what constitutes nine-tenths of popular religion; the other tenth is a suffusion of the rest by the percolation into it of nobler, more beautiful and profounder ideas of the Divine which minds of a greater spirituality have been able to bring into the more primitive religious concepts of mankind. The result is usually crude enough and a ready target for the shafts of scepticism and unbelief,—powers of the human mind which have their utility even for faith and religion, since they compel a religion to purify gradually what is crude or false in its conceptions. But what we have to see is how far in purifying and elevating the religious instinct of worship any of these earlier motives need to survive and enter into the Yoga of devotion which itself starts from worship. That depends on how far they correspond to any truth of the Divine Being and its relations with the human soul; for we seek by Bhakti union with the Divine

and true relation with it, with its truth and not with any mirage of our lower nature and of its egoistic impulses and ignorant conceptions.

The ground on which sceptical unbelief assails Religion, namely, that there is in fact no conscient Power or Being in the universe greater and higher than ourselves or in any way influencing or controlling our existence, is one which Yoga cannot accept, as that would contradict all spiritual experience and make Yoga itself impossible. Yoga is not a matter of theory or dogma, like philosophy or popular religion, but a matter of experience. Its experience is that of a conscient universal and supracosmic Being with whom it brings us into union, and this conscious experience of union with the Invisible, always renewable and verifiable, is as valid as our conscious experience of a physical world and of visible bodies with whose invisible minds we daily communicate. Yoga proceeds by conscious union, the conscious being is its instrument, and a conscious union with the Inconscient cannot be. It is true that it goes beyond the human consciousness and in Samadhi becomes superconscient, but this is not an annulment of our conscious being, it is only its self-exceeding, the going beyond its present level and normal limits.

So far, then, all Yogic experience is agreed. But Religion and the Yoga of Bhakti go farther; they attribute to this Being a Personality and human relations with the human being. In both the human being approaches the Divine by means of his humanity, with human emotions, as he would approach a fellow-being, but with more intense and exalted feelings; and not only so, but the Divine also responds in a manner answering to these emotions. In that possibility of response lies the whole question; for if the Divine is impersonal, featureless and relationless, no such response is possible and all human approach to it becomes an absurdity; we must rather dehumanise, depersonalise, annul ourselves in so far as we are human beings or any kind of beings; on no other conditions and by no other means can we approach it. Love, fear, prayer, praise, worship of an Impersonality which has no relation with us or with anything in the universe and no feature that our minds can lay hold of, are obviously an irrational foolishness. On such terms religion and devotion become out of the question. The Advaitin in order to find a religious basis for his bare and sterile philosophy, has to admit the practical existence of God and the gods and to delude his mind with the language of Maya. Buddhism only became a popular religion when Buddha had taken the place of the supreme Deity as an object of worship.

Even if the Supreme be capable of relations with us but only of impersonal relations, religion is robbed of its human vitality and the Path of Devotion

ceases to be effective or even possible. We may indeed apply our human emotions to it, but in a vague and imprecise fashion, with no hope of a human response: the only way in which it can respond to us, is by stilling our emotions and throwing upon us its own impersonal calm and immutable equality; and this is what, in fact, happens when we approach the pure impersonality of Godhead. We can obey it as a Law, lift our souls to it in aspiration towards its tranquil being, grow into it by shedding from us our emotional nature; the human being in us is not satisfied, but it is quieted, balanced, stilled. But the Yoga of devotion, agreeing in this with Religion, insists on a closer and warmer worship than this impersonal aspiration. It aims at a divine fulfilment of the humanity in us as well as of the impersonal part of our being; it aims at a divine satisfaction of the emotional being of man. It demands of the Supreme acceptance of our love and a response in kind; as we delight in Him and seek Him, so it believes that He too delights in us and seeks us. Nor can this demand be condemned as irrational, for if the supreme and universal Being did not take any delight in us, it is not easy to see how we could have come into being or could remain in being, and if He does not at all draw us towards him,—a divine seeking of us,—there would seem to be no reason in Nature why we should turn from the round of our normal existence to seek Him.

Therefore, that there may be at all any possibility of a Yoga of devotion, we must assume first that the supreme Existence is not an abstraction or a state of existence, but a conscious Being; secondly, that he meets us in the universe and is in some way immanent in it as well as its source,—otherwise, we should have to go out of cosmic life to meet him; thirdly, that he is capable of personal relations with us and must therefore be not incapable of personality; finally, that when we approach him by our human emotions, we receive a response in kind. This does not mean that the nature of the Divine is precisely the same as our human nature though upon a larger scale, or that it is that nature pure of certain perversions and God a magnified or else an ideal Man. God is not and cannot be an ego limited by his qualities as we are in our normal consciousness. But, on the other hand, our human consciousness must certainly originate and have been derived from the Divine; though the forms which it takes in us may and must be other than the divine because we are limited by ego, not universal, not superior to our nature, not greater than our qualities and their workings, as he is, still our human emotions and impulses must have behind them a Truth in him of which they are the limited and very often, therefore, the perverse or even the degraded forms. By approaching him through our emotional being we approach that Truth, it comes down to us to meet our

emotions and lift them towards it; through it our emotional being is united with him.

Secondly, this supreme Being is also the universal Being and our relations with the universe are all means by which we are prepared for entering into relation with him. All the emotions with which we confront the action of the universal existence upon us are really directed towards him, in ignorance at first, but it is by directing them in growing knowledge towards him that we enter into more intimate relations with him, and all that is false and ignorant in them will fall away as we draw nearer towards unity. To all of them he answers, taking us in the stage of progress in which we are; for if we met no kind of response or help to our imperfect approach, the more perfect relations could never be established. Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their bhakti, *tathaiva bhajate*. Whatever form of being, whatever qualities they lend to him, through that form and those qualities he helps them to develop, encourages or governs their advance and in their straight way or their crooked draws them towards him. What they see of him is a truth, but a truth represented to them in the terms of their own being and consciousness, partially, distortedly, not in the terms of its own higher reality, not in the aspect which it assumes when we become aware of the complete Divinity. This is the justification of the cruder and more primitive elements of religion and also their sentence of transience and passing. They are justified because there is a truth of the Divine behind them and only so could that truth of the Divine be approached in that stage of the developing human consciousness and be helped forward; they are condemned, because to persist always in these crude conceptions and relations with the Divine is to miss that closer union towards which these crude beginnings are the first steps, however faltering.

All life, we have said, is a Yoga of Nature; here in this material world life is her reaching out from her first inconstancy towards a return to union with the conscient Divine from whom she proceeded. In religion the mind of man, her accomplished instrument, becomes aware of her goal in him, responds to her aspiration. Even popular religion is a sort of ignorant Yoga of devotion. But it does not become what we specifically call Yoga until the motive becomes in a certain degree clairvoyant, until it sees that union is its object and that love is the principle of union, and until therefore it tries to realise love and lose its separative character in love. When that has been accomplished, then the Yoga has taken its decisive step and is sure of its fruition. Thus the motives of devotion have first to direct themselves engrossingly and predominantly towards the Divine, then to

transform themselves so that they are rid of their more earthy elements and finally to take their stand in pure and perfect love. All those that cannot coexist with the perfect union of love, must eventually fall away, while only those that can form themselves into expressions of divine love and into means of enjoying divine love, can remain. For love is the one emotion in us which can be entirely motiveless and self-existent; love need have no other motive than love. For all our emotions arise either from the seeking after delight and the possession of it, or from the baffling of the search, or from the failure of the delight we have possessed or had thought to grasp; but love is that by which we can enter directly into possession of the self-existent delight of the Divine Being. Divine love is indeed itself that possession and, as it were, the body of the Ananda.

These are the truths which condition our approach to this Yoga and our journey on this path. There are subsidiary questions which arise and trouble the intellect of man, but, though we may have yet to deal with them they are not essential. Yoga of Bhakti is a matter of the heart and not of the intellect. For even for the knowledge which comes on this way, we set out from the heart and not from the intelligence. The truth of the motives of the heart's devotion and their final arrival and in some sort their disappearance into the supreme and unique self-existent motive of love is therefore all that initially and essentially concerns us. Such difficult questions there are as whether the Divine has an original supraphysical form or power of form from which all forms proceed or is eternally formless; all we need at present say is that the Divine does at least accept the various forms which the devotee gives to him and through them meets him in love, while the mixing of our spirits with his spirit is essential to the fruition of Bhakti. So too, certain religions and religious philosophies seek to bind down devotion by a conception of an eternal difference between the human soul and the Divine, without which they say love and devotion cannot exist, while that philosophy which considers that One alone exists, consigns love and devotion to a movement in the ignorance, necessary perhaps or at the least useful as a preparatory movement while yet the ignorance lasts, but impossible when all difference is abolished and therefore to be transcended and discarded. We may hold, however, the truth of the one existence in this sense that all in Nature is the Divine even though God be more than all in Nature, and love becomes then a movement by which the Divine in Nature and man takes possession of and enjoys the delight of the universal and the supreme Divine. In any case, love has necessarily a twofold fulfilment by its very nature, that by which the lover and the beloved enjoy their union in difference and all

too that enhances the joy of various union, and that by which they throw themselves into each other and become one Self. That truth is quite sufficient to start with, for it is the very nature of love, and since love is the essential motive of this Yoga, as is the whole nature of love, so will be too the crown and fulfilment of the movement of the Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO

By integral endurance, perfect mental plasticity and the organisation of an integral progress, conquer the vital enemies.

★

By vital stability, by purified life-energy and by the supramental influence in the cells, it will be possible for the body consciousness to undergo the supramental transformation which will fix the Ananda in the sex-centre.

★

Be completely obedient to the Divine's Love. This will transform your being till it becomes supramentally plastic.

★

First aspire for vital purity and fix firmly a thorough stability in the vital. Then only can you in truth make the offering of your vital being to the Divine.

★

Silence all outside noise, aspire for the Divine's help; open integrally to it when it comes and surrender to its action, it will effectively bring about your transformation.

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF PERSONALITY *

I

ONE of the earliest, as well as one of the most widespread of man's conceptions of God—as the One Being—had visioned Him to be the all-seeing, all-knowing and all-pervasive Father Who is the sole Creator and Sustainer of the worlds. It was this image which came to form the central doctrine of the main monotheistic religions of the world. But although this conception became the centre of such world-sweeping religious influences, deeper experiences of God appear, which cannot be confined within this fixed and apparently conclusive idea of the Supreme. Moreover in these religious systems we find that there is the tendency to regard God as an exclusively extra-cosmic Being who exists apart and aloof from His Creation. But if God is all-pervasive, as He is deeply felt to be, then He is certainly a living Presence in the world, as well as being aloof in His abode or Heaven beyond. And we can indeed feel the intimate Presence of that soul-stirring Reality far more closely from within than through any externalised conception of Him.

It is from such experiences that the inner seeking for a more direct way of knowing God, and for a more intimate union with Him, had arisen. The quest and the yearning of the mystics and religious seekers of all times, through their intensive endeavour to know and to feel that very Presence from which man was traditionally separated, have beaten a path for us to follow. They had revealed that beyond the Cosmos one experiences directly that divine Ground and Nature, which is the very Purity of God's Being; and further that that greater Reality can be known more surely and more powerfully through the innermost part of one's own being. This revelation resulted in the growing awareness that a deeper and larger Reality exists which could not be fathomed by any mental ideation or verbal interpretation. It is only through one's own effort and experience that one can know and achieve that Divine Reality. To realise the One Supreme,

* Based on "*The Life Divine*."

therefore, became the central goal and all-absorbing passion which stirred the whole efforts of those spiritual venturers.

In the past there had been broadly two main lines of endeavour in this mystical quest for union with the Divine. On the one hand, was the conscious attempt to ascend to and experience those higher planes of existence where the pure Divine Nature reigns in all its aloofness from the Creation and the Activity. This was the path which had been pursued mainly by the Eastern mystics; and which had culminated in that experience of an infinite Transcendent Calm and Silence, which is the Ground of the Divine Reality, though not its integral Heights. The experience of that infinite Stillness, however, became so absorbing that the ever-creative Dynamism of the Divine, which is the well-spring of our earthly life, was lost. And thus the world came to be regarded merely as a grand Illusion or Maya. On the other hand, there was the attempt, mainly by the Western mystics, to bring down into the world, by an intense aspiration and subsequent act of Grace, the very Bliss and ecstasy of that Divine Reality. This pursuit had resulted largely in an intensity of Love and ecstatic union with God, and the realisation of His living Presence in the world. But as with the Eastern mystics this path also had led to a one-sided endeavour. The Divine Love flooding and overpowering the individual in its intensity finally became a transient and evanescent possession, which could not be sustained without the more stable and secure basis of an integral God-knowledge. Thus the efforts to ascend to the Heights, unmindful of man's connections with the depths, and the attempts to realise God in the very lowest levels of Life and Matter without regard for the Heights, both resulted in only a partial knowledge. Moreover these divided efforts had produced mainly individual achievements, which being scattered and disparate, could not consolidate and embrace the vastness of the Divine Reality, especially in relation to the need of Earth and humanity. For such is the all-inclusive wideness of that One Reality that its entire and integral fullness cannot be realised, except by the progressive opening from within the soul, as well as an ever-widening consciousness of That which is above. Both the Divine Knowledge which comes from that ascent to the Heights, and the Divine Love which descends in response to an intense yearning and aspiration, together form the interwoven strands of man's endeavour to realise the wholeness of the Divine Reality.

As man progressively enters into that all-embracing God-consciousness so he becomes aware of a far more comprehensive and intimate Knowledge, which surpasses his former fixed and circumscribed conception centred on an extra-cosmic Deity, or even beyond that wide and infinite supracosmic

vision of the Transcendence which had appeared to be the finality and goal of all God-knowledge. Beyond the man-imagined personal aspect of God, and beyond even the cosmic-imagined impersonal vision of the Supreme, stands the pure Divine Nature and Being. It is only this comprehensive experience of the Divine which can give the true integral knowledge that present-day man is vaguely seeking. For while an extra-cosmic conception of Deity had merely led to a materialistic view of the world from which the very reality of God was eventually excluded, an all-absorbing endeavour to immerse one's whole being in that pure Transcendent Self beyond, had resulted in the utter neglect of this earthly life. Modern man, however, apparently unattracted by a partial approach to knowledge, is possibly beginning to realise that an integral Reality is the ultimate Truth of things.

It is only in a wider experience of God that we discover the true integral nature of the Supreme. This, as the ancients had disclosed, is the real key both to our self-knowledge and to our knowledge of the world and Cosmos. For that wider God-knowledge belongs essentially to experiences which surpass all our limited mental formulations, springing rather from those more profound depths of man which are at present latent and hidden from him. Here lies the secret soul-entity, which being the very seed and substance of the Divine contains not only the means of knowing and realising the Divine Reality, but also the latent power of growing into that Fullness and Perfection. To the awakening soul everything is seen to be God; each particle is seen to contain the very essence of the Divine Nature as its secret centre. One comes to realise that the Divine is truly an omnipresent Reality, which even in the multitudinous diversity of the Cosmic Creation, as equally as in the infinite aloofness of the Transcendence, is eternally a supreme Unity. It was indeed through that fundamental revelation of Oneness—that the essential Self in all things and the Transcendent Self beyond are One—which gave the ancient Vedantic Seers the vision that a Divine growth and movement is the central Truth of the cosmic Reality. The Supreme was realised to be an infinite and all-extensive Omnipresence, a Multiplicity emerging from an unmanifest Transcendence. God was seen to be above and below, the seed and the sustainer, and the beginning and the end of all existence. It is indeed through those greater revelations, preserved as they have been in the ancient scriptures of Veda and Upanishad, that modern man can best form a firmer foundation for his future knowledge, and at the same time give him a truer perspective of man and the universe.

It was by this vision that the Vedantic seers came to realise the ultimate Nature of the Supreme—as the indivisible compound of Being, Conscious-

ness and Bliss, which was denoted by the term Sachchidananda. But even by that central formula they realised that the supreme Wholeness is infinitely beyond all that can be seized even through the widest reaches of mind. To describe the Infinite in a language of finite terms, the ancients were obliged to express in negatives the all-extensiveness of the One Supreme, ("not this.....not that"). By passing beyond the limited mental outlook however, to that Consciousness which transcends Cosmos, the ancient Seers had discovered a rapid and direct means of realising the three-fold consistency of the Supreme. But although the Transcendent Consciousness thus revealed the secret Nature of Divinity, they realised also that this latter was not the be-all and end-all of Existence. By realising the innermost Truths of the Cosmic Creativity, they discerned that the same triple Nature was a central and integral constituent of the minutest parts, as well as of the Whole. Thus it was revealed that the Divine Nature, secreted seed-like within the individual soul, can by a conscious effort progressively grow into That. For this is the seed of transformation which had been scattered and sown throughout the whole Cosmic Creation, and from which man now emerges as the highest promise of a Divine unfolding. Creation, therefore, was essentially the step-by-step descent of that Divine Nature, with the consequent scattering of Its seed-like Essence to become the central points of an emergent Evolution.

Here in this wider vision of Reality, we see how the ancient Truths can light up the lines along which Science is tentatively probing. Modern thought however, has not yet admitted that the unitive and comprehensive knowledge of the Supreme, or the soul-filled consciousness of that all-pervading Presence which has hitherto belonged solely to mystical experience, is in fact the fundamental basis of his further knowing. Finite thought is humbled and stilled by that infinite realisation, or else flees fear-stricken from the seeming possibility of being submerged by that infinite expansiveness. In face of that Vastness, all one can say is that apart from the Supreme nothing can exist, and that That is the sole-existent Unity which embraces all the diversities and multiplicities, and at the same time is beyond these, the infinite Matrix and the inexpressible Unmanifest. But for the individual enmeshed in the Ignorance of the world, the Supreme is above all an Omnipresent and inner-living Reality. By seizing that inner Presence, and entering into the infinite Vastness, and becoming possessed by the Spirit of that Omnipresent Reality, we can progressively widen our consciousness. Thus does one become aware of the goal, and the path which man must tread if he is to fulfil his Divine destiny in this terrestrial life.

We discover however, that the chief difficulty from the very outset, lies in our present instrumentation of knowing, which given its own freedom of action soon proves to be an utterly false and unreliable guide. But though we are at present necessarily circumscribed by this restricted outlook, this does not mean that we cannot widen our conception and knowledge beyond mind. Something deep and insistent within man stirs up a discontentment with the contradictions of his present picture of Reality, which with its divided and vacillating uncertainty is patently a fragmentary representation built up of partial aspects of a Whole that is as yet unseizable. It was due to that vacillating and separative action of mind in which the integral Unity could not be wholly defined or grasped, that there had arisen so many diverse and conflicting concepts representing what was purported to be the ultimate Truth. Modern thought, however, unsatisfied by the explanations of a lifeless materialism as the sole index of Truth, and equally incredulous of some otherworldly interpretation, is now seeking a more integrative comprehension of Reality. At first the materialised mind took up Life, in the form of vitalism, as being the one fundamental reality. The massive evidence of the newly-discovered evolutionary movement had certainly forced a new entity other than Matter to be accepted as a reality also. But the inherent blindness of that evolutionary development, soon discouraged any claim of Life to be the one self-purposive and all-knowing Reality. It was apparent that some transcendent Power must necessarily be the guiding Force and Consciousness behind the whole movement. This led to the investigation of Mind, with its greater powers of penetration and its higher ranges of thought-flight, as being a more possible claimant to the rôle of the one universal and dominant entity underlying Reality, But in spite of the freer and less rigid nature of Mind there was still a Beyond which the mind itself could not fathom or encompass. It thus becomes evident that the entities Matter, Life and Mind, each a reality intimately inter-related in a complex Multiplicity, are in fact parts of a greater Whole and Unity. It is at this juncture that we encounter the difficulty of present-day thought to break the circle of its own conscious limitations. Not only has modern man rejected or ignored the very Reality of God—considered to be a primitive inheritance from his forebears,—but he has shut out the ancient claim of the soul to be the central Reality of the individual person. But the soul only appears to be insignificant and undeveloped merely because the condition for its growth and expansion has not been fulfilled or fostered. Thus by ignoring the ancient spiritual knowledge, modern thought is seriously limiting itself and preventing its own liberation from that net of uncertainties in which it is at present entrammelled.

It is only when we begin to realise the true meaning and purpose of God's entry into the material substance and life-movement, that the whole evolutionary process assumes a vaster significance. Thus we see that the Divine Nature in its Descent, had formed at definite stages those subtle worlds or planes which constitute the background and subliminal pattern of the whole Cosmic Reality. And it was from these planes that the Manifestation had emerged, and is yet emerging. First there was the inner Creation or involution of those typal worlds, and then came the manifest reality of which Matter, Life and Mind have thus far emerged in the Earth's evolution. Spiritual experiences into the as yet occult spheres of Cosmos have further revealed that a Supramental plane exists which is not only the unmanifested entity of man's higher evolution, but is in fact the very keystone and link to a Divine transformation. It is clear that from the very beginning the secret goal was to manifest the Divine Nature in all its integrality, in the living substance of a material world. And therefore the central aim of man, as the highest emergent of this progressive unfoldment, must be the conscious development in and from himself of that Divine Perfection which will ultimately make the fulfilment of God's Purpose a visible and manifest actuality.

Just as the Supreme Reality had expressed itself through many successive though co-existent forms of Consciousness—from the widest freedom and extensiveness of pure Spirit to the uttermost compression and limitation of inert Matter—so man in his progressive evolutionary ascent cannot become perfect integrally if he renounces what has already been given to him as the basis and root of that development. Not only must he perfect his mental life and accomplishments, but he must also take up the very physical base which is the foundation of his earth life. The tendency of the past, we find, was all too frequently to neglect or reject this material ground, in pursuing a spiritual life. We are reminded, however, of the ancient Greek ideal of establishing a healthy and vigorous outlook of mind only on a strong basis of bodily perfection, thus preserving the ever-present balance and inter-relationship between Mind and Matter in a more integrated life. But even more so, for a fuller and completer existence, have the subtle links between body and Spirit to be realised externally. In this endeavour life itself must be activated and not suppressed, as it formerly was, for it is the vital force of life which supplies the impetus for those self-directed efforts. It is seen moreover, that Life is centred on that triple formation of Consciousness,—the individual, the cosmic and the supra-cosmic—which is the basic pattern and imprint of the Divine throughout all the steps of the Manifestation. Thus in the biological process, for instance,

the single cell is the fundamental unit of life; the recurrent rhythm and pulse-beat its cosmic dynamism; and the purposive flow which directs the whole movement that of a transcendent Will. Here we observe that the individual centre is not only the origin, but is throughout the permanent and integral factor of a progressive enlargement. And just as we need not give up bodily life in order to attain the highest spiritual achievements, so we need not lose that essential individual centre in entering a wider Consciousness.

To the ancient seers the quest for Knowledge aimed only at an actualisation of Truth through individual effort and development, so that eventually one may become a centre of enlightened action. They had realised that the universe is but the body and visible Presence of an infinite and all-extensive Supreme; and that the individual is the central instrument for the detailed execution of the Cosmic Scheme. The attainment of a higher Knowledge was therefore the fundamental step by which the individual could become conscious of the Cosmic Action,—as well as of the Transcendent Silence. It was only in later endeavours that the tendency arose to equate that attainment of the Transcendent Consciousness with the ultimate submersion or obliteration of individuality. For if Cosmos is ultimately an illusion, as it was supposed, then the individual being as a part of that Cosmic framework and activity could likewise have no final reality or permanency. In fact for both the naturalistic tradition of the West, as well as for the ascetic idealism of the East, the individual existence was ultimately taken to be a transitory or temporary phenomenon in the earthly life. Soul was either deprived of its divine nature and potentiality, or else regarded as a mere drop of the Transcendent Self, to merge and finally lose its own identity in that infinite Sea of Silence. But if the true destiny of man's existence is to manifest the Divine Reality here in this earthly life—and no other goal can be envisaged—then the individual is indeed the living point through which the Divine can act and ultimately bring about that Divine emergence in the world.

It is only through the full recognition of this divine destiny of the individual soul on Earth that the persistent conflict and division in human thought and endeavour can eventually be resolved and harmonised. For the very basis of this knowledge rests on our embracing the full integral conception of the Supreme Reality,—its static and dynamic formations, its personal and impersonal aspects, and its inner and outer relations. Firstly, in seizing the Unity of the Transcendent Reality beyond, we must at the same time be able to grasp and retain our hold on the Reality of the Multiplicity itself, in which the earth-life is the centre of an emergent Evolution.

Secondly, it is the individual centre—the divine spark secreted within man—that is the real link with God, and His true instrument in the action and progression of the world. In man's present condition, however, this centre is largely, if not wholly, obscured by an all-dominant ego. It is only by an inner aspiration and spiritual endeavour that one can overcome the claims of ego to be that sole dominant centre of the being, and so open the way for the true soul to emerge and become the guiding factor of one's life. Thirdly, we must see that in the dynamic Action of the Supreme the multiple unity of Cosmos is emerging through three broad stages: the subconscious, the conscient and the superconscient. In the progressive manifestation of Cosmos, through the evolutionary movement, the beginning was composed entirely of a unity of subconscious elements, which being unaware of their own existence formed the fixed and neutral ground for some higher emergence. It is from these static inconscient levels that we have the first dynamic but as yet half-conscient stirring of Life, impelled by a Force outside the whole of its collective movement. Only later do we have the more conscious glimmers, which promised a yet higher emergence. The true conscient stage only began to appear with the development through man of the individual ego, which henceforth became the surface point unifying and binding together a distinct personality. It also became the chief directing agent behind all man's external activities. But the ego is a limited instrument, and is not by any means the final stage of man's evolutionary development. Rather is it a transitory step in the progressive manifestation of the One Reality; for the ego at the most can only make a unity out of surface appearances, and cannot include in that all which operates behind the veil. Moreover the ego is firmly entrenched in the belief of its own separative existence, and cannot perceive that the individual is one with others also. It is this exclusive and limited outlook of a dividing ego-faculty, which constitutes our present imperfect personality. Only when the ego-barrier, by a self-realisation, begins to be broken down, and with it the narrow personal consciousness it had firmly built around itself, can our lower nature begin to open to and be uplifted by that which is at present superconscient to us. Through that higher consciousness we become aware of the true cosmic unity behind the veil of external appearances; and at the same time we experience that Transcendent Calm and Silence which surpasses all mental comprehension.

By this progressive development we can see that man's God-directed action in the world can only be effected through the liberation and full emergence of the individual soul as the pre-dominant centre of one's being. This liberation in its fullness means the seeking not only for the union with

the Transcendent One, which is merely an individual liberation, but also for union with the Cosmic Many; for it is particularly this self-extension of uniting with the Multiplicity, which can bring about a spiritual resurgence in the world. And even a single soul attaining that integral liberation can stimulate an outburst of similar God-conscious states in other souls. It was this utter self-giving of the liberated soul which made Buddha resolve not to enter Nirvana finally until all humanity had been delivered from the bondage of ego. But this does not imply that man cannot attain to the Highest while living in the world, as many have believed. On the contrary, it is in fact necessary to retain a hold on the unillumined activity of the world in order to really transform it. Only thus can the Enlightened bring the Light and Power of the Divine more permanently into human life.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

Resolutely keep up the spirit to conquer the vital enemies who stand in the way of the opening of your vital to the Divine's Love.

The Divine's Love is the sure maker of vital harmony which will lead to a very successful future.

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Surrender all falsehood; your physical mind will be converted and a mental victory won.

THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION

(III)

WHAT action should I do and what should I refrain from doing?" "What work will best help my self-offering and deliver me from my desires and attachments?" "What kind of service will be acceptable to the Divine?" These are some of the problems which often beset and perplex the Karmayogin at the outset of his spiritual career. There is an aspiration in him, a sincerity, a faith, a fervid, if somewhat flurried, will to self-surrender; what is lacking is knowledge,—knowledge not only of the precise nature and implications of his goal, but also of the path, its ups and downs, its mazes and meanderings, its pitfalls and blind alleys. Mere goodwill cannot be, in the beginning at least, a guarantee of perfect immunity. Experience has to be purchased, knowledge to be acquired at the price of many an error and stumble. But most of these errors can well be avoided if the Yogin can avail himself from the start of the guidance of a Guru, a knower of the path and the goal. Because he has trodden the path and arrived at the goal, the Guru can be trusted to lead him, pointing out the pitfalls and protecting him from the visible and invisible attacks.

Still a certain amount of knowledge is essential, for, without a little light in the consciousness, the spiritual adventure may end in a dismal shipwreck. The long passage between the human mind and the infinite consciousness is full of dangers and difficulties, and it is inadvisable to dare to traverse it by the sheer strength of one's will or the ardours of one's heart. The Gayatri, the famous hymn of the Hindus, is a prayer for light in the consciousness, and many verses of the Upanishads too invoke and evoke the same light—"dhi". It is this initial light that makes for the right reception and proper assimilation of the teachings of the Guru and a confident surrender to his guidance. It is from this standpoint of the fostering of the light that Swaddhyaya, the concentrated musing on the sacred teachings, is so much enjoined upon the followers of the spiritual path. It is, therefore, with an aspiration for this light—the light that leads, the light that watches and warns, and lifts and consoles us when we "fall upon the thorns of life

and bleed"—that we turn to the gracious words of the Mother. These words, or rather sparks shot from the brazier of universal Love, at once kindle the fire of our soul and set aglow our normal consciousness, so that it may cut off its moorings and launch upon the Infinite.

In this article we shall dwell upon some of the teachings of the Mother regarding the proper accomplishment of Yogic action, especially the avoidance of some of the snares of its path and the renunciation of the ideas, habits and tendencies to which our ignorant nature is all too prone.

"See, how small is the importance of external circumstances. Why strain and stiffen in the effort to realise thy conception of the Truth? Be more supple, more confident. The only thing thou hast to do is not to let thyself be troubled by anything. To torment oneself about doing good brings about as bad results as bad will. It is in the calm of deep waters that lies the sole possibility of true Service."¹

In this short paragraph, packed with suggestions, the Mother has embodied three invaluable instructions which every spiritual seeker would do well to lay to heart and practise. The first is that the external circumstances have not much intrinsic importance. Their value lies in the idea we form and the use we make of them. In spiritual life it is always the inner condition, the trend and drift of the psychological elements, the attitude and the spirit that count, and not so much the outer circumstances, whose favour and menace are equally utilised by the soul for its evolution. Sometimes congenial circumstances minister to our spiritual growth and sometimes they prove a positive hindrance. Very often the buffet of adverse circumstances fires the being into a more intensive effort and induces an integration of its parts which would have otherwise remained either dully apathetic or feebly responsive to the call of the Spirit. The Yogi comes to discover, as he proceeds on his way, that the circumstances and conditions of his life are not chance happenings, but the impeccable dispensation of a Providence that is working out, in its inscrutable way, the liberation and perfection of his complex nature. He ceases to take the circumstances at their face value, for, in fact, they have none in spiritual life, but goes behind them to glimpse the hand of the Guide. Proceeding still further, he learns to look upon all circumstances, good and bad, scowling

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 19. These words spoken by the Divine have a special significance and a special bearing on the life and experiences of the Mother. Here we are concerned only with their general import and universal applicability.

and smiling, with the calm gaze of eternity—they shed all their secular values and distinctions and become but the steps of the self-fulfilling Will of the Divine in him.

The second counsel the Mother gives is that we should not “strain and stiffen” in our effort to realise our conception of the Truth. What we usually do is to form a mental idea of the Truth we want to attain. The idea, no doubt, has its utility; it becomes for the time being the focal point of the progressive energies of our nature. But as soon as our mind opens into a higher consciousness and new truths begin to dawn upon it, it must know how to give up its preconceived ideas, its rigid constructions and hail the new truths. Without this readiness to renounce the old, limited conceptions and the suppleness to receive the new, expanding aspects of the Truth, we shall remain tethered to the ambitious ignorance of our mind and continue to hug our complacent consistency in a vain pride. What we should never lose sight of is the fact that Truth is one and infinite, though its formulations are many and mutable, and however brilliant a formulation may appear to our mental consciousness, however much it may claim our homage and fealty, to make it the only ideal to be realised is to elect to live in a half-way house and refuse to go forward. Surely, nothing can be more preposterous than to make the mind our guide in the boundless realms of the Spirit. All that it can possibly do is to lead us on to some comparatively serene uplands of our normal consciousness and make us believe that we have arrived at the summit of our soul’s aspiration. This is nothing short of a camouflaged spiritual catastrophe.

There is another danger in depending entirely upon the guidance of the mind. It is a common experience of those who have studied their own nature that the ego thrives best on the strict principles and stringent rules it imposes upon itself, and feels not only secure but glorified if it can entrench itself in a lofty code of inflexible ethics. Cock-sure of the validity of the prepossessions, it presumes to dictate its spiritual course, and, in spite of the Guru’s leading and the soul’s experiences, it strives to force its consciousness and nature into a preconceived mould and pattern. This stress and domination of the mental ego spells an arrest of the spiritual evolution, though it may rig out an ethical Joseph and make him masquerade as a spiritual Paul.

What is most needed in spiritual life is an infinite plasticity and an ungrudging capacity for renouncing the lower for the sake of the higher and ascending from the plains to the plateaus and from the plateaus to the radiant peaks. A springy tread, a supple grasp and a soaring aspiration characterise a genuine seeker of the Truth. The last renunciation of the

mind is the renunciation of its knowledge and its pretentious purity, which done, it can easily surmount itself and steadily progress towards the infinite Truth.

The third teaching of the Mother is: "The only thing thou has to do is not to let thyself be troubled by anything." Fret and worry are a great hindrance to Yogic action in as much as they ruffle the poise of the being and disturb the equality of consciousness which is the basis of all spiritual progress. To be troubled is to betray one's weakness and relapse into a mental confusion. Usually it is the vital-emotional being that, hurried by some desires and predilections, creates a ferment in the consciousness and a feverish impatience to realise the ideal, but the very ferment and fever cloud the ideal and deflect the will. "To torment oneself about doing good brings about as bad results as bad will." We may be pursuing an altruistic object, but an agitated consciousness with an unsteady will often produces results contrary to our expectations, results which appear to have been brought about by a bad will. There are many instances, recorded in the lives of Yogins, of a disastrous fall from the path caused by a restless desire for "doing good." Under this desire, so innocent in our eyes and so laudable in those of others, we forget for a while the goal we have set out to attain and give rise to many complications in our own psychology. Not only do our preferences and attachments enter into our choice of the work, but the atmosphere and vibrations of those we want to serve introduce into the work elements which often militate against or throw out of gear the developing trends of our being. Our consciousness is obscured as a result of this unhappy decision and choice, and we have perforce to submit to the "determinism of the order of the realities in which we are conscious" at the moment; "whence all the consequences, often unforeseen and unfortunate, contradictory to the general orientation of life and forming obstacles, sometimes terrible, which have afterwards to be surmounted."¹ Altruism, philanthropy, humanism are all good in their places and conducive to the growth of the moral being and the development of disinterestedness—some subtle, self-regarding interest, however, remains even in this mental disinterestedness—but the Yogic life is a revolutionary departure from the common standards and traditional courses of human existence, and it is dangerous to be in two minds about its pursuit. If I seek the Divine and a dynamic union with Him in my entire being and at the same time open myself to the suggestions and solicitations of my ethical mind, which is even at its best

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 46.

a mind of twilit ignorance, I allow the brightest part of my consciousness to be eclipsed, my will deflected and my nature yoked to a category of determinism which may seriously imperil my spiritual progress. It is only our ignorance of the diverse determinisms of the different planes of consciousness and different orders of realities that makes us rush into any action that appeals to our surface being. An indiscriminate undertaking of the actions preferred by the mind usually leads to a confusion of values and a chaos of consequences. What then should a Yogin do when many ideals appeal to his mind and many actions demand his decision and choice? What is the most important criterion of Yogic action? The Mother's words depict two successive states of the Yogin:—first, that in which he is seeking union and identification with the Divine through Yogic action as well as through love and knowledge; and, second, that in which he acts in the Divine, by the direct dynamisation of the divine Will. The whole attitude of the Yogin in the first state is summed up in the following words, "Grant that more and more I may be perfectly awakened to the awareness of Thy constant Presence. Let all my acts conform to Thy Law; let there be no difference between my will and Thine. Extricate me from the illusory consciousness of my mind, from its world of phantasies; let me identify my consciousness with the absolute Consciousness, for that art Thou."¹ The attunement of the will of the Yogin to the will of the Divine through a progressive elimination of the desires and attachments of the old Adam is the first objective. Each action before it is undertaken has to be referred to the Guru, or in the absence of the Guru, to the indwelling Divine for approval and sanction, so that none of the desires of the being, physical, vital or mental, may go to determine our decision and choice. Not what we think best and essential, but what the Divine, the Author and Master of our being, demands of us, should be undertaken and accomplished in the spirit of a joyous sacrifice. So long as we have not attained to some kind of union with the Divine, so long as we live in the ordinary consciousness, "nothing should...be treated lightly, with indifference; the smallest circumstances, the smallest acts have a great importance and should be seriously considered; for we should at every moment strive to do that which will facilitate the identification of our consciousness with the eternal Consciousness, and carefully avoid all that can be an obstacle to this identification. It is then that the rules of conduct having at their base a perfect personal disinterestedness should assume all their value."² In this state of aspiring but unexalted human

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 57.

² *ibid.*, p. 54.

consciousness, it would be not only fatuous but spiritually fatal to believe or claim that we are instruments of the divine Will and have no personal responsibility of the actions we do. Such a belief is always attended with most ruinous consequences—an abnormal magnification of the ego, a precipitation of the crude vital forces and a straying away from the right path. And yet the consciousness of being a divine instrument has to be attained, the sense of ourselves being the doers of our actions has to go. This paradox is resolved by the double movement of rejection and surrender,—rejection or repulsion of all egoistic desires and a progressive surrender and opening of the whole consciousness and nature to the developing action of the divine Force. Desirelessness, so much insisted upon in the Gita, is the best insurance against delusions and errors. A desireless heart is a pure heart and a fit temple for the installation of the divine Presence. It is only in a desireless consciousness that the divine Will can manifest itself.

We learn, then, from the above words of the Mother, that the touchstone of a true yogic action, done from the ordinary consciousness, is that it should not be impelled by any self-regarding desire, however humane and noble it may be, but by an unflagging aspiration for union with the Divine through an increasing conformity to His self-manifesting Will. At each step of our journey, “the duality will present itself”—whether to do this or to do that—and at each step we have to make a choice, surrenderingly and irrevocably. It is only the sincerity—absolute and integral sincerity—of our aspiration and the answering action of the divine Grace that can take us through the tangled forest of Yogic action—*gahana karmano gatih*.

But when we live in the Divine, identified with Him, our will attuned to His Will, our springs of action moved by Him alone, we perceive the relativity of all terrestrial circumstances and we say, “Doing this or that has after all no great importance; yet such and such a way of action will be the best utilisation of such and such a faculty or temperament. All actions, whatever they may be, even the most contradictory in appearance, can be the expression of Thy Law in the measure in which they are imbued with the consciousness of that Law, which is not a law of practical application capable of being translated into principles or rules in the ordinary human consciousness, but which is a law of attitude, of a constant and general consciousness, something which is not at all expressed by formulas, but which is lived.”¹

In that unbanked consciousness “all problems regarding what we should

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 54.

or should not do or concerning all the resolutions to be taken, appear easy, a little childish". For "the best use to be made of our physical organism, Thy mode of manifestation upon earth, it is enough, when Thou alone art conscious in us, to turn our regard towards this body to know indisputably (for, there is no room for any doubt there) what is the thing it can do best, what is the activity which will employ most completely all its energies."¹ The right intuition springing out of that union, or to put it more graphically, the Will of the Divine, flashing out of the union, impels the action of the Yogin, his mind stilled into a receiving and transmitting channel, and his body, a plastic and thrilled dynamo of divine energies.

But whatever the nature and magnitude of the action, whatever the range and depth of its results, "without attaching any great importance to this activity, to this quite relative utilisation, we can take, without any difficulty, without any inner discussion, the decisions which, to the outer consciousness, appear most daring and hazardous."²

For, after all, what is an action, even a most stupendous and far-reaching action, but a relative and transitory utilisation of human faculties, an ephemeral bubble of the universal Force, before the moveless infinity and eternity of the Absolute! To be attached to an action, however great it may be, is to forfeit one's union with the Absolute. A Yogin must "rise above the perception of contingencies" and see "things from the heights of Thy eternity."

The Mother's words ring in our ears as we close this brief exposition:— "It is in the calm of deep waters that lies the sole possibility of true service." No precipitancy, no inquietude, no tension, no anxiety or worry about doing this important duty or that, serving the society or helping humanity, but taking an inner plunge through love and knowledge and dedicated action, and, in the unassailable peace and serenity of the depths, discovering the Will of the Divine, surrendering our own to it and letting it fulfil itself in every movement of our life—this is true service. Whom else should man serve 'f not the eternal Maker and Master of his being? And how else can he best serve Him except by the direct instrumentation of His Will and Force?

RISHABHCHAND

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 53.
 ibid., p. 53.

TRUE PROGRESS

WHAT is Progress? In what does it truly consist?

Man once upon a time wielded tools of stone. It is when the ape learnt to handle a stone-tool that he became man. Again, when man knew how to make and use a tool of iron, a tremendous change, a revolution occurred in him, he became *civilised*. Here was another decisive step in his progress. And today man is using steam and electricity as his tool. Therefore we declare him to be most civilised, consider that he has reached almost the peak of progress.

Is it really so? The criterion of man's manhood is to be found in the tools he uses? But look at or imagine a modern dictator with an atom bomb in his hand—is he so very different from the Neanderthal man with his uncouth club?

No, the test of Progress is not in the tool that one handles, but in the consciousness that one possesses within. What is the nature of the consciousness? How deep it is, how wide, how high—there lies the test of progress.

And the greatness of consciousness may go very well with the modesty of the tool.

The depth and width and height of consciousness does not mean abundance of knowledge—richness and variety either. Knowledge that is only a storing and enhancement of the sciences means a betterment of the mere tool—the tool of mind and intelligence.

But mind and intelligence may be simple and modest—unscholarly—yet the consciousness accompanying it may be high and deep and vast—Rama-krishna's, for example.

When Duryodhana's choice fell upon the armies of Narayana, he preferred to possess a better tool. Arjuna chose Sri Krishna; i.e., he asked for the greater consciousness.

A better tool may make of man a more capable animal, but cannot effect a change in his spots.

Man's humanity, indeed his divinity, consists exactly in this change of spots—change of nature and character. That means the heightening, the

THE TRADITIONS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

THE Veda is the spiritual and psychological seed of Indian culture and the Upanishads the expression of the truth of highest spiritual knowledge and experience that has always been the supreme idea of that culture and the ultimate objective to which it directed the life of the individual and the aspiration of the soul of the people: and these two great bodies of sacred writing, its first great efforts of poetic and creative self-expression, coming into being at a time preceding the later strong and ample and afterwards rich and curious intellectual development, are conceived and couched in the language of a purely psychic and spiritual mentality. An evolution so begun had to proceed by a sort of enriching descent from the spirit to matter and to pass on first to an intellectual endeavour to see life and the world and the self in all their relations as they present themselves to the reasoning and the practical intelligence. The earlier movement of this intellectual effort was naturally accompanied by a practical development and organisation of life consciously expressive of the mind and spirit of the people, the erection of a strong and successful structure of society shaped so as to fulfil the mundane objects of human existence under the control of a careful religious, ethical and social order and discipline, but also so as to provide for the evolution of the soul of man through these things to a spiritual freedom and perfection. It is this stage of which we get a remarkably ample and effective representation in the immediately succeeding period of Indian literary creation.

This movement of the Indian mind is represented in its more critical effort on one side by a strenuous philosophical thinking crystallised into the great philosophic systems, on the other by an equally insistent endeavour to formulate in a clear body and with a strict cogency an ethical, social and political ideal and practice in a consistent and organised system of individual and communal life and that endeavour resulted in the authoritative social treatises or Shastras of which the greatest and the most authoritative is the famous Laws of Manu. The work of the philosophers was to systematise and justify to the reasoning intelligence the truths of the self and man and the world already discovered by intuition, revelation and spiritual experience

and embodied in the Veda and the Upanishads, and at the same time to indicate and systematise methods of discipline founded upon this knowledge by which man might effectuate the highest aim of his existence. The characteristic form in which this was done shows the action of the intuitive passing into that of the intellectual mentality and preserves the stamp and form expressive of its transitional character. The terse and pregnant phrase of the sacred literature abounding in intuitive substance is replaced by a still more compact and crowded brief expression, no longer intuitive and poetic, but severely intellectual,—the expression of a principle, a whole development of philosophic thought or a logical step burdened with considerable consequences in a few words, sometimes one or two, a shortest decisive formula often almost enigmatic in its concentrated fullness. These sutras or aphorisms became the basis of ratiocinative commentaries developing by metaphysical and logical method and with a considerable variety of interpretation all that was contained at first in the series of aphoristic formulas. Their concern is solely with original and ultimate truth and the method of spiritual liberation, *moksha*.

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The philosophic writings of the time and the religious poetry of the Puranas and Tantras which mixing together and soon becoming a single whole proved to be the most living and enduring movement of the classical age, had the most abiding result in the mind of the people, were the creating force and made the most conspicuous part of the later popular literatures. It is a remarkable proof of the native disposition, capacity and profound spiritual intelligence and feeling of the national mind that the philosophic thinking of this period should have left behind it this immense influence; for it was of the highest and severest intellectual character. The tendency that had begun in earlier times and created Buddhism, Jainism and the great schools of philosophy, the labour of the metaphysical intellect to formulate to the reason the truths discovered by the intuitive spiritual experience, to subject them to the close test of a logical and severely dialectical ratiocination and to elicit from them all that the thought could discover, reaches its greatest power of elaborate and careful reasoning, minute criticism and analysis and forceful logical construction and systematisation in the abundant philosophical writing of the period between the sixth and thirteenth centuries marked especially by the work of the great southern thinkers, Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. It did not cease even then, but survived its greatest days and continued even up to our own times throwing up some-

times great creative thinking and often new and subtle philosophical ideas in the midst of an incessant stream of commentary and criticism on established lines: here there was no decline but a continuous vigour of the metaphysical turn in the mind of the race. The work it did was to complete the diffusion of the philosophic intelligence with the result that even an average Indian mentality, once awakened, responds with a surprising quickness to the most subtle and profound ideas. It is notable that no Hindu religion old or new has been able to come into existence without developing as its support a clear philosophic content and suggestion.

The philosophical writings in prose make no pretension to rank as literature; it is in these that the critical side is prominent, and they have no well-built creative shape, but there are other productions in which a more structural presentation of the complete thought is attempted and here the literary form adopted is ordinarily the philosophical poem. The preference for this form is a direct continuation of the tradition of the Upanishads and the Gita. These works cannot be given a very high place as poetry: they are too overweighted with thought and the preoccupation of an intellectual as distinguished from an intuitive adequacy in the phrase to have the breath of life and impetus of inspiration that are the indispensable attributes of the creative poetic mind. It is the critical and affirmative intelligence that is most active and not the vision seeing and interpretative. The epic greatness of the soul that sees and chants the self-vision and God-vision and supreme world-vision, the blaze of light that makes the power of the Upanishads, is absent, and absent too the direct thought springing straight from the soul's life and experience, the perfect, strong and suggestive phrase and the living beauty of the rhythmic pace that make the poetic greatness of the Gita. At the same time some of these poems are, if certainly not great poetry, yet admirable literature combining a supreme philosophical genius with a remarkable literary talent, not indeed creations, but noble and skilful constructions, embodying the highest possible thought, using well all the weighty, compact and sparing phrase of the classical Sanskrit speech, achieving the harmony and noble elegance of its rhythm. These merits are seen at their best in poems like the Vivekachudamani attributed to Shankara, and there we hear even, in spite of its too abstract turn, an intellectual echo of the voice of the Upanishads and the manner of the Gita. These poems, if inferior to the grandeur and beauty of earlier Indian work, are at least equal in poetic style and superior in height of thought to the same kind anywhere else and deservedly survive to fulfil the aim intended by their writers. And one must not omit to mention a few snatches of philosophical song here and there that are a quintessence

at once of philosophical thought and poetic beauty, or the abundant literature of hymns, many of them consummating in their power and fervour and their charm of rhythm and expression which prepare us for the similar but larger work in the later regional literatures.

The philosophical creations of India differ in this respect from the bulk of the metaphysical thinking of Europe that even when they most adopt the intellectual form and method, yet their real substance is not intellectual, but is rather the result of a subtle and very profound intelligence working on the stuff of sight and spiritual experience. This is the result of the constant unity India has preserved between philosophy, religion and Yoga. The philosophy is the intuitive or intellectual presentation of the truth that was sought for first through the religious mind and its experiences and it is never satisfied by discovering truth to the idea and justifying it to the logical intelligence, although that is admirably done, but has its eye always turned to realisation in the soul's life, the object of Yoga. The thinking of this age, even in giving so much prominence to the intellectual side, does not depart from this constant need of the Indian temperament. It works out from spiritual experience through the exact and laborious inspection and introspection of the intellect and works backward and in again from the intellectual perceptions to new gains of spiritual experience. There is indeed a tendency of fragmentation and exclusiveness; the great integral truth of the Upanishads has already been broken into divergent schools of thought and these are now farther subdividing into still less comprehensive systems; but still in each of these lessened provinces there is a gain of minute or intensive searching and on the whole, of a loss of breadth of the heights, in recompense some extension of assimilable spiritual knowledge. And this rhythm of exchange between the spirit and the intelligence, the spirit illumining, the intelligence searching and arriving and helping the lower life to absorb the intuitions of the spirit, did its part in giving Indian spirituality a wonderful intensity, security and persistence not exemplified in any other people. It is indeed largely the work of these philosophers who were at the same time Yogins that kept the soul of India alive through the gathering night of her decadence.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Compiled from "The Defence of Indian Culture" by Indra Sen.)

REVIEWS

(I)

In Search of the Miraculous. *By P.D. Ouspensky.* **All and Everything.** *By G. Gurdjieff.* (Both Routledge and Kegan Paul. 30 S.)

The first book presents an interesting instance of the pitfalls that await those who pursue mystic paths with the flickering light of Reason. Intellect is a powerful weapon and like all such weapons it is a good servant but a bad master. Ouspensky is gifted with a rare logical acumen and that is also his greatest failing when he seeks realities that are suprarational. The book suffers from the same besetting error as his other work 'A New Model of the Universe', viz.: an incapacity to overleap the bar of a mental test if, for instance, mathematics did not help the conception of the Fourth Dimension, he would never have accepted it nor attempted to test its reality by inner experience. Even in the present work he is fascinated by prodigious calculations of the relation of the different time-units of the seven cosmoses which, like a system of Chinese boxes, compose the All, according to his theory.

We will here concern ourselves with two features of the book. Middleton Murry complains with justification that the book is reprehensibly reticent about the reasons that led to Ouspensky's parting company with Gurdjieff whom he himself presents as a master of arcane science. We may here develop a feeble hint and legitimately hazard two guesses. Ouspensky says that he was forced to distinguish between the man and his ideas. Gurdjieff had a technique of his science which he argued could not be practised fruitfully except by the pupil giving himself up entirely to the authority of the teacher. So the first reason might have been the impossibility of meeting this demand. All spiritual practice demands an implicit faith in the Guru and a complete abdication by Reason of its authority. This is the greatest stumbling block for the scientific mind of the West. The Mother once said of the Western people: "They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mother's milk the sense of individuality". So a man who acted for years as a

kind of advance agent for Gurdjieff might have struck down at the first blow delivered at his rational mode of thought. But this is less probable because from the very nature of Gurdjieff's teaching we can understand that the man could not himself have lived up to his ideas. 'All and Everything' is a pocket volume of 1200 pages which fill the reader with insufferable boredom. Gurdjieff was in fact an occultist and not at all a spiritual seeker. But in Europe very few are gifted with that perspicacity which can clearly discern true spirituality. There everything occult or abnormal and strange passes for the Ultimate Truth. Lytton Strachey, for instance, considers Coleridge's 'Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner' and 'Christabel' as great landmarks in English poetry because they open the doors to the Eternal and the Infinite. Now the poems evidently carry an afflatus of the vital plane whence comes all that is associated with ghosts and ghouls, etc. Certainly, these poems are wonderful creations of imagination but however high human imagination might soar, it cannot perch on the summits of the spiritual altitudes. We are often appalled by the immensity of a force and consider it as Infinite and Eternal. But though the powers of our Mind and Vital are immense, still they are not infinite. This is why a complete surrender to the light of the Guru is indispensable because many powers and principalities of the mid-regions, the valley of false glimmer can, masquerade as the Infinite and the Eternal. But it is also incumbent that the Guru be one who has established himself in the Truth-Consciousness which broods far above the Mind. As Sri Aurobindo puts it: 'Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision'. Gurdjieff, unlike Ouspensky, is less concerned with cosmology than with the psychological reconstruction of man. According to Gurdjieff there are three centres in man, 'the thinking, the emotional and the moving. The connection between them, in the vast majority of men, is automatic, and the influence of the moving centre dominant. In order that man's will may be real, the thinking and feeling centres must be liberated from the domination of the moving centre'. This is the aim of Gurdjieff and for this a complete surrender to the Master is considered essential. In the first instance this is a very superficial dealing with the problem of human life. These three centres represent only the apparent man. Even here Gurdjieff ignores one other centre which has perhaps a still greater hold on human life and that is the physical consciousness which is the seat of all the lower-most movements of consciousness such as inertia, resistance and unwillingness to all change, fears and stupidities. Gurdjieff deals only with the mental and the vital nature of man but leaves out of account the physical, the inconscient. He only hints at it when he says that an external

and unquestioned authority is required to impose the new discipline: otherwise the inertia of habit will be too strong. But this citadel can be won not by a mental control which seeks to arrive at some adjustment of the warring elements and not their transformation into the Spirit-Stuff. "It is only the very highest supramental Force descending from above and opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical Nature and annihilate its difficulties." (Sri Aurobindo)

Thanks to modern researches in Psychology we now know it quite well that there is no possibility of an abidingly effective control over the blind nether forces in man by mental power. At any moment an upsurge from the dark chambers of consciousness might throw away the yoke imposed by mind. Hence there is little wonder if Ouspensky left Gurdjieff because he was forced to distinguish between the man and his ideas.

The achievement of Ouspensky after four years' training under Gurdjieff also bears out the truth of what Sri Aurobindo writes in the *Life Divine*. "For the faculties that transcend the senses, by the very fact of their being immeshed in Matter, missioned to work in a physical body, put in harness to draw one car along with the emotional desires and nervous impulses, are exposed to a mixed functioning in which they are in danger of illuminating confusion rather than clarifying truth. Especially is this mixed functioning dangerous when men *with unchastened* minds and unpurified sensibilities attempt to rise in the domains of spiritual experience. In what regions of unsubstantial cloud and semi-brilliant fog or a murk visited by flashes which blind more than they enlighten, do they not lose themselves by that rash and premature adventure." (*Life Divine*). We may here note that Ouspensky saw a kinship between sexual passion and spiritual ecstasy. He avers that he has attained the goal, which is described by him in these words, "If something big were to happen, something which would require the straining of every nerve, then I know that this big thing would be met not by the ordinary small I which is now speaking but by another, a big I, which nothing can frighten and which would be equal to everything that happened. I cannot describe it better." It might appear as a striking achievement in the West because of the feverish haste that characterises the life there—a life without any choice or direction. But to a spiritually-minded Indian the game would not appear to be worth the candle. Either it is the magnified ego or at best that purest quality of Nature, Sattwa, the "power that makes for assimilation, and equivalence, right knowledge and right dealing, fine harmony, firm balance, right law of action, right possession and brings so full a satisfaction to the mind". (Sri Aurobindo). But all this is 'precarious, secured by limitation, dependent on rule and condition'.

The goal of the spiritual seeker is far beyond all this. Here is a description of the life spiritual by Sri Aurobindo "That is not limited nor dependent on limitation or rule or condition but self-existent and unalterable, not the result of this or that harmony amid the discords of our nature but the fount of harmony and able to create whatever harmony it will. That is a luminous spiritual and in its native action a direct supramental force of knowledge, jyotih, not our modified and derivative mental light, prakasha. That is the light and bliss of widest self-existence, spontaneous self-knowledge, intimate universal identity, deepest self-interchange, not of acquisition, assimilation, adjustment and laboured equivalence. That light is full of luminous spiritual will and there is no gulf or disparateness between its knowledge and its action. That delight is not our paler mental happiness, sukham, but a profound concentrated intense self-existent bliss extended to all that our being does, envisages, creates, a fixed divine rapture, Ananda. The liberated soul participates more and more profoundly in this light and bliss and grows the more perfectly into it, the more integrally it unites itself with the Divine. And while among the gunas of the lower nature there is a necessary disequilibrium, a shifting inconstancy of measures and a perpetual struggle for domination, the greater light and bliss, calm, will of kinesis of the Spirit do not exclude each other, are not at war, are not even merely in equilibrium but each an aspect of the two others and in their fullness all are inseparable and one". (Essays on the Gita Sec. series p. 271). This is the goal of the high-aspiring effort for a Divine liberation and not a mere ability to face the impacts of life with equanimity.

R. K.

II

Communism and its Indian props. By C. Parameswaran. The New World-Order Publications, M/52, Agarwal Building, M. Block, Connaught Circus, New Delhi. Pp. 80. Price -/12/-.

Some years ago when a French politician observed that a man who is not a socialist at 19 has no heart and one who is a socialist at 21 has no head, his sardonic humour sent round a hilarious applause. We do not exactly remember the age limits; but it is enough for our purpose to note that he truly voiced what was a generally held opinion that socialism was a luxury of the irresponsible and was bound to wither away when faced with the stern realities of life and responsibility. History however has belied this optimistic hope. Socialism and Communism of which the former is the "lower phase" have grown from strength to strength till today they

very nearly engulf half the globe within the folds of their red banner. Communism has its adherents in every land and, be it noted, there are a number of responsible intellectuals, idealists and reformers to be counted among them. This doctrine has captured the imagination of the masses of workers and peasants in a manner which even organised religions like Christianity or militant ones like Islam failed to do. What is the basis of such a philosophy of life, a title to which Communism puts forward an exclusive claim? What is the secret of its phenomenal growth and world-wide ramifications? And how far is it a solution to the problems confronting us? And finally what is the position of a country like India *vis à vis* the world movement of Communism? These are the main questions that have been dealt with vigour and logic in this brief booklet of 80 pages. The author has done well to go to the very source-works like *Das Kapital* and expositions by Lenin, Stalin, etc. for quotations and authority in support of his arguments exposing the radically wrong basis of approach to life by the Communist and in demonstrating the ways and means in which this insecure, fallacious doctrine is sought to be universally propagated.

Karl Marx in collaboration with Frederik Engels issued in 1848 the famous Communist Manifesto enunciating the principles of the movement that was to go by his name. A thorough and detailed exposition of Communism as a social ideology was presented by Marx in the three volumes of *Das Kapital*, the first of which was published by him in 1867 and the other two posthumously arranged and published in 1885 and 1894 by his good friend Engels. This 'Marxian theory with its subjective and objective details (was) enriched and perfected with the practical wisdom', gained while leading the successful socialist revolution in Russia, by Lenin who is 'esteemed as the *continuator* of the Marxist line'. This Marxist-Leninist Theory is the only valid basis though there have been differences regarding its interpretation as exemplified by the Stalinist and Trotskyite schools of Communism.

The basic assumption of Communism is that *matter* is the only source of life. It is the laws inherent in unintelligent matter acting mechanically that bring about historical development-changes. Man is not a free agent. He is severely limited by the operation of economic factors which in themselves are dependent upon the particular methods of production current in the society. Changes in society are 'mainly the results of alterations of economic relations brought on by changing methods of production and distribution' (Francis Coker quoted by the author). There is a continual state of conflict between the classes that own the means of production and the classes that toil to produce. The former are the bourgeoisie and the

latter the workers—to be organised as the proletariat. ‘The bourgeoisie and the proletariat are not fixed entities. The bourgeoisie, the ruling class of today constituted the proletariat, the oppressed working class of yesterday; it is a continuous and continuing process, automatic’ (p. 21). ‘The time for a final overthrow and total destruction of the bourgeoisie class in every country in the world’ is *now*. A dictatorship of the working class and the establishment of a socialist State is the immediate desideratum. The transition to the ‘higher phase’ of an entirely communist, classless and stateless society is sure, but how it is going to be effected nobody knows. Lenin himself, characterised by a recent European writer as an ‘honest thinker’ in contradistinction to Stalin whom he calls a most ‘dishonest thinker’ for the felicity with which he handles history to prove the infallibility of his Bible, admits:

“.....And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing further, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule, ‘From each according to his ability, to each accord ing to his needs’. By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim we do not and cannot know.”¹

Meanwhile the revolution must be promoted. The means used are secondary. All means are legitimate as long as they serve the End. And here is Karl Marx declaring epigrammatically, ‘Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one’.

Naturally in such a scheme of things all that pertains to the non-physical side of man, his heart, his mind and his soul, is dismissed as useless effervescence. Religion, spirituality become the ‘opiates’ with which the bourgeoisie in power hold the others down. The author has discussed the much advertised “freedom of religion” in Soviet Russia and exposed the communist strategy on the point by quoting from Lenin, who held that ‘religious prejudices’ were stuck deep among the masses and that it was not prudent to dissipate energy on this front because ‘unity in this revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of opinion among the proletarians about a paradise in heaven. That is why we do not and we must not proclaim our atheism in our programme.’ (p. 14).

The author notes with alarm the dangerous spread of this misanthropic Gospel in the post-war world of disequilibrium, particularly in Asia and analyses the technique of the Moscow-directed agents to function under any labels and foment unrest and deepen the cleavage in society so as to render it 'ripe'. People in India are a helpless witness to the skilful manipulation of economically and politically deteriorating conditions by the Communists to their own advantage not merely in the areas of Telangana, the hill tribes of Central and Eastern India, but in West Bengal and East Punjab where roving masses of disappointed and desperate refugees provide a fertile ground for the neo-saviour with the sickle and the hammer. The author has expressed his apprehension that Kashmir is following suit and recent events like the Governing body of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference 'bolting its doors against the members of the exploiter class' are shown to be straws showing the wind.

We may not agree with the author's analysis of the various forces making for the growth of Communism in India; but we whole-heartedly accept his reading that 'Marxism succeeds because the ruling conditions in India have no integral or direct affinity or connection with the (natural Indian) foundation'. (P. 56). To re-form the entire fabric of the national life more and more in conformity with the genius of the soil which expressed itself in the high Ideals of Dharma—not the dogma and the conventional load of beliefs and injunctions which pass under the name at present—but the broad, living and catholic way of life in which every individual, whatever his or her station in life, every community whichever its function in the corporate life, has his or her or its just claims recognised and provided for by the Society, a Dharma which contains in itself the seeds of the highest outflowering of the freedom of the individual and the society in all the fields of life—economic, political, social and spiritual—would seem to be the one way of setting right the twist which threatens to mis-shape the destiny of a nation.

M. P.

III

Yatindramatadipika By *Srinivasadasa*, with English translation and Notes by *Swami Adidevananda*. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. pp. 212+43. Price Rs. 5/-

This book, as the title shows, is a light that illumines the religio-philosophic system of Sri Ramanuja whose religion is founded upon the lives and teachings of the Alwars, Vaishnava saints and the Pancharatra Agamas with

Sriman Narayana for the Supreme Godhead, and whose philosophy is deduced from the Upanishads followed and supported by the Gita and Brahmasutras. Srinivasadasa, the Sanskrit author is a direct descendent of the famous Dasarathi, nephew and desciple of Sri Ramanuja, while himself was a desciple of the great Dodddayacharya, or in Sanskrit, Mahacharya, author of many works on the system of Sri Ramanuja. The author does not lay claim to originality, but his work embodies the essentials in the writings of many authors before him who came after Sri Ramanuja propagating the supremacy of Sri Vaishnava religion and the philosophy of Visishtadwaita. Srinivasadasa calls his work Sariraka Paribhasha, after the manner of the Vedanta-paribhasha of Dharmarajadhwarin on the side of Advaita. The work is divided into ten sections called *avataaras* beginning with the Introduction, *Upodghata*, which begins with the statement that Sriman Narayana, qualified by Chit and Achit is the Sole Reality. It is followed by sections on Perception, *pratyaksha*, Inference *anumana*, Trustworthy utterance *śabda*, Nature *prakriti*, Time *kāla*, Eternal splendour or manifestation *nitya-vibhuti*, Attributive consciousness *dharmabhutajnana*, Individual Soul *jiva*, God *Ishwara*, Non-substance *adravya*. Thus in these divisions the quintessence of the Southern school of Vaishnavism with the philosophy of Visishtadvaita as propounded by Sri Ramanuja is given in easy language which is at once lucid and precise, and serves very well to qualify a student to enter into the higher studies of Visishtadvaita system and dialectics, as in the writings of Vedanta Desika and Sri Ramanuja.

Now about the translation: the book opens with a brief but illuminating Foreword from Prof. P. N. Srinivasacharya, well-known authority on the subject. The translator's Introduction covers many pages in which accurate statement of the position of Visishtadvaita philosophy in regard to Jiva, Ishwara, Nitya-vibhuti, Dharmabhuta Jnana etc. is given and the date of Srinivasadasa is shown to be somewhere in the 17th century. There is a valuable conspectus for each section followed by the text with English translation on the same page. One notable feature in the translation is this that every important term which requires explanation is numbered in each section and it is explained at the end of the book in 'Notes and References' which alone cover 54 pages. Swami Adidevananda's plan is admirable. The Notes and Explanations cover a vast field of knowledge and give precious information obtained from a study of many authors and from discussions with living authorities on Southern Vaishnavism in which tradition *sampradaya* counts so much. For though the Sanskrit text is not at all difficult in many places explanation is necessary. In the olden days when there was no printing, the student had necessarily to sit at the feet of the teacher

to learn the implications, suggestions and references made in certain passages of the text. I shall give a simple illustration of the point. In the sixth Avatara, the author uses the word *astra-bhushana-adhyaye* i.e. 'in the chapter on weapons and ornaments'. Now, what the author means is this: the City of Vaikuntha, Sesha the serpent, gate-keepers, the weapons and ornaments of the Lord are all symbolic and these symbolisms can be learnt from that chapter in the Vishnu Purana which deals with the subject. This and many more explanations are to be found in the Notes and References. The Chatur-vyuha theory, as far as we know, emanates from the Pancharatra school which must have been a living creed before the Brahmasutras were written, as it is referred to in II.2.42-45, and it is an important element in the Sri Vaishnava cult.

A word about this religious system. We can very well understand the instinct of self-preservation and zeal of any sectarian religionist. But all the same, it carries with it a certain offensive element that provokes other sects to retort; in this way the story of Vaishnavism and Shaivism in South India has not been free from blemish, as is evidenced in the life of Sri Ramanuja himself who was subjected to untold hardships from religious persecution. When one reads in this excellent compendium such petty excuses for reasonings as "the system of Shaivas is rejected owing to its acceptance of Pashupati as the end to be attained and smearing of ashes etc. opposed to the Vedas as the means", we are dumbfounded. It is remarkable that such statements ignore the possible, why, actual retort coined in the same mint from the other side. It is a wonder how great devotees and teachers gave support to such religiosities in the name of the Supreme Godhead. We can very well appreciate the intensity and single-minded devotion of the devotee addressing his Deity 'Lord, thou alone art *the* God, my Sole Refuge, I know none other.' That is a faith that is admirable and leads towards the Godhead. But to proclaim and argue that others are doomed is a different matter. And that certainly is not the teachings of the Alvars, God-men, who form the backbone of religious worship in Southern Vaishnavism.

Apart from such offensive elements that have encrusted the framework of this institution of Sri Vaishnava Religion, it is an excellent form for worship, and contains many occult truths which it has incorporated into it from the Pancharatra.

As for Philosophy, it affords a sound basis for practical and personal religion. In the words of the Foreword, 'God is defined as the Saririn, Self of souls and matter, as these two live and move and have their being in Him..... Bhakti and Prapatti form the chief means of liberation or Mukti,

Prapatti as absolute surrender to God is available to all souls...’ We may note in passing that the philosophy of Sri Ramanuja does not admit ‘knowledge by identity’ at all and holds that the *triputi*—the triplicity of knower, known and knowledge is there—to establish the impossibility of the subject, in any state or condition, being or becoming the object. This is a much debated and debatable question, and the verdict is to be obtained by appeal to the Yogic consciousness and spiritual experiences as recorded in the Upanishads, or the statements of saints and sages past and living. How are we to understand straightly the spirit of the famous verse of the most revered God-man among the Alvars, Nammalwar, which describes the state of liberation and liberated consciousness, ‘VIDU’? Even then the scriptural texts or utterances of Yogins may be stretched and commented upon to suit the convenience of the philosophic position taken up by the debating party. That is why Sri Aurobindo has always held that the mind that is already convinced of the error in the opponent can easily find argument to support its verdict. That is also why he urges us to develop the spiritual outlook and gain the spiritual consciousness and experience in which one realises that Consciousness *chit* is not the same thing as *jnana*, Knowledge. For while the former is independent and free in itself and fundamental to Existence itself, *chit* or *achit*, the latter is bound to the formula of *triputi* i.e. knower, known and knowledge. Consciousness can and may take the form of *triputi* or may not. Once we realise and appreciate this fact of spiritual experience, we have accepted and appreciated also the philosophical positions taken up in the systems of Advaita, Dvaita and Visishtadvaita in regard to the subject of Consciousness and we then discern error only in the exclusiveness in such systems as deny the validity of spiritual knowledge and experience on which the systems on their positive side were originally built. We can very well, then, appreciate also the scriptural texts in their original set-up that support the different systems as not contradicting one another, but as recognised facts of experience. The contradictions in the scriptural texts need not be reconciled by dividing them into important and unimportant texts or by any other device. They can be allowed to remain as they are. They are reconciled in a knowledge of the spiritual Consciousness which alone holds the real solution and not metaphysical sword-rattling. Mental knowledge is riddled with countless probables and possibles and can hardly be the arbiter in matters that concern the province of the Spirit.

* நன்றாய் ஞானம் கடந்துபோய்

namrāy jñānam kaṇḍupoy, after fully crossing the (domain of) Knowledge

which is the sphere of direct knowledge. Or in the words of the Poet, in Savitri:

“A million faces wears her knowledge here
And every face is turbaned with a doubt.”

This book is a suitable textbook for beginners and a very good introduction to the study of Visishtadvaita. Swami Adidevananda's skill, industry and scholarship are patent, while the translation, never an easy task, has been faithfully done. In some places, the translation of some Sanskrit terms or passages may be done differently. But then, such alternative suggestions can always be made by an intelligent reader, even in the works of best known authorities. It is meet that we refrain from irrelevant suggestions. The broad sympathies that Swami Adidevananda has brought to bear upon the task are quite in line with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda tradition; and, this is a creditable performance.

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